THE NORTHERN WORLD

Kingship and State Formation in Sweden 1130-1290

Philip Line



THE NORTHERN WORLD

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Kingship and State Formation in Sweden 1130-1290

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Kingship and State Formation in Sweden 1130-1290

By
Philip Line



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Cover illustration: from top to bottom, seals of the Swedish kings Sverker the Elder, Knut Eriksson and Magnus Ladulås.

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A NOTE ON SPELLING

Throughout the work I have retained Swedish, and where appropriate Danish or Norwegian, terminology for administrative districts and officials, settlement units and other cultural phenomena peculiar to Scandinavia, since many of these do not directly correspond with the English words into which they are frequently translated. These words and their plural forms may be found in the glossary at the end of the main part of the work. For personal names from regions that used the Latin alphabet I have adopted the modern spelling from the person's country of origin. Although queen of Sweden, the name of the wife of King Valdemar Birgersson therefore appears as Sofie Eriksdatter. As an exception to this rule I have, however, retained the spelling familiar to English readers for Popes and their legates; for instance, Gregory, not Gregorius. If the origin of a person is uncertain, I have adopted the Swedish spelling, as in the case of Archbishop Stefan. Russian names are transliterated into one of the two accepted English forms.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCES

Before the main part of the work a brief word on the nature of the available source material is necessary; however, specific problems encountered with its use are handled when and where appropriate throughout the text of the thesis. By comparison with those available for the history of Norway and Denmark, written sources for the history of Sweden between 1130 and 1290 are very poor. In part this is a product of Sweden's late conversion to Christianity, with which came literacy, and in part of the destruction of many source documents in fires such as that which engulfed Stockholm castle in 1697. Some of the earliest surviving sources are monastic, *calendaria*, concerned largely with the religious vocation, and *necrologia*, lists of the dead for whom masses were sung. The earliest *calendarium*, the 'Vallentunadiaret', dates from 1198. The earliest extant annals were written by the Dominicans in the late thirteenth century, but contain few entries on the period before 1250. Many of the earlier entries concern Denmark rather than Sweden, betraying the origin of many of the scribes. The quantity of diplomatic correspondence, donation letters, testaments and monastic charters similarly increases after 1250, but is still relatively small, the majority being included in the first volume of *Diplomatarium Suecanum*.

As a result, the historian is often dependant on sources written after 1290. The most important of these are the extant regional law-texts, the *landskapslagar*, which date from c. 1290 to the mid-fourteenth century. These contain a wealth of information on administrative, legal and social practices of their time, but it is not easy to determine how old these were when written down. Attached to the early version of Västergötland's law-code (which may date to c. 1280) is the earliest known king list, and also a list of local bishops and *lagmän*. Later lists of kings from eastern Sweden have also survived. In addition there are a number of monastic annals from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and several chronicles dating from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Closest in date to the period is the rhyme chronicle *Erikskrönikan*, written by an unknown author between c. 1320 and 1340. This gives a poetic account of the period between the enforced exile of Erik Eriksson in 1229 and the accession of

Magnus Eriksson in 1319, heavily influenced by continental romances and without any clear chronology. Of later chronicles those of most value are Ericus Olai's *Chronica regni Gothorum*, Olaus Petri's *Svenska Krönika* and Johannes Messenius' *Scondia Illustrata*, dating from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively. All probably had access to sources that are now lost to us, but it is difficult to distinguish the reliable from the unreliable.

Alongside these written sources from Sweden itself, there are a number of references to Swedish events in foreign sources, particularly those of Denmark, Norway, Iceland, northern Germany and Novgorod. Many are annals, but there are also Danish and Icelandic historical works written between c. 1200 and 1284, notably Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum*, Snorri Sturlusson's *Heimskringla*, *Sverris saga*, and Sturla Thórðarson's *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* and the fragmentary *Magnúss saga*. Neither these nor the Swedish annals and chronicles are concerned with what we would conceive as 'historical analysis'. Medieval chroniclers had no concept of historical change or development beyond the 'progression' towards Doomsday that exists in many clerical works, and even this is absent in the works of lay historians. Their histories are tales of great men and their deeds, and it is these deeds that determine events.

With such a scarcity of written evidence, Swedish scholars have frequently had recourse to archaeological and place-name evidence, and the evidence of post-medieval maps. None of these tell us anything about specific events, but all have been used in attempts to reconstruct settlement patterns, social structure and more controversially, early administrative divisions. Archaeological work carried out in the last quarter century has been particularly valuable, but analysis has increasingly concentrated (for very good reasons) on the wider cultural landscape, rather than reconstruction of administrative structures, and therefore has less direct relevance to the subject of the study. The greatest part of Swedish scholarship on the details of events, genealogies and identification of the specific landholdings of leading families used in this study was done in the early and mid-twentieth century, and a great debt is owed to their work. I make no claim to have discovered anything new, only to re-examine what they and their successors have uncovered.

ABBREVIATIONS

Law texts

Ä = Ärvdabalken
ASun = Andreas Sunesen's summary of Scanian Law
B = Byggningabalken
D = Dråpsbalken
DL = Dalalagen
E = Edsöresbalken
fl. = flock
FL = Frostatingslagen
G = Giftermålsbalken
GL = Gutalagen
GulL = Gulatingslov
HL = Hälsingelagen
ms = manuscript
J = Jordabalken
JL-Jske lov (Sw. Jyllandslagen)
Kg = Konungabalken
Kk = Kirkobalken
Km = Köpmålabalken
KrL = Kristoffers Landslag
M = Manhelgdsbalken
MEL = Magnus Eriksson's Landslag
MESt = Magnus Eriksson's Stadslag
ÖgL = Östgötalagen
R = Rättegångsbalken
REA = Registrum ecclesiæ aboensis (Åbo domkyrkas svartbok)
SdmL = Södermannalagen
SjL = Sjællandske lov (Eriks SjL, Valdemars SjL)
SkL = Skånelagen
Tj = Tjuvabalken
TK = Tiohärads Kyrkorätt
UL = Upplandslagen
V = Vådamålsbalken
VgL 1 = Early Västgötalagen

VgL 2 = Later Västgötalagen
VmL = Västmannalagen
Þ = Þingmålabalken

Journals, series and manuscript collections

ANF = Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi
ÄSF = Äldre svenska frälseslägter
BT = Bebyggelsehistorisk Tidskrift
DD = Diplomatarium Danicum
DHT = Historisk Tidsskrift (Denmark)
DMS = Det Medeltida Sverige
DN = Diplomatarium Norvegicum
DS = Diplomatarium Suecanum
FARS = Forskningsprojektet administrativa rumsliga system
FHT = Historisk Tidskrift för Finland
FMU = Finlands medeltidsurkunder
Fv = Fornvännen: Tidskrift för svensk antikvarisk forskning
HAik = Historiallinen Aikakauskirja
HArk = Historiallinen Arkisto
Hyal Moniste = Helsingin yliopiston arkeologin laitos Moniste
HU = Hansisches Urkundenbuch
KÅ = Kyrkohistorisk årsbok
KLNM = Kulturhistorisk Lexikon for nordisk medeltid från vikingatid till reformationstid
KVHAA = Kungliga Vitterhets-, historie-, och antikvitesakademiens handlingar
MGH SRG = Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumenta Germanica Historica recusi
MS = Mediaeval Scandinavia
NGL = Norges Gamle Lov
NHT = Historisk Tidsskrift (Norway)
NoB = Namn och Bygd
PHT = Personhistorisk Tidskrift
RN = Regesta Norvegica
SGL = Samling af Sveriges gamla lagar
SHT = Historisk Tidskrift (Sweden)

SKAS = Suomen Keskiajan Arkeologian Seura
SLS = Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland
SM = Suomen Museon Virasto
SMA = Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistyksen Aikakauskirja
ST = Sveriges Traktater med Främmande Magter
USL = Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck
SBL = Svensk biografisk lexicon
SJH = Scandinavian Journal of History
SKS = Suomen Kielen Seura
SKHS = Suomen Kirkkohistoriallinen Seura
SMHD = Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii ævi
ST = Sveriges Traktater med Främmande Magter
UFT = Upplands fornminnesförenings tidsskrift

PREFACE

The history of Sweden in the High Middle Ages has attracted little attention outside Sweden itself. In part this is a product of Sweden's geographical position on the northern periphery of Europe. Both this and its late conversion to Christianity arguably distanced it from the mainstream of European culture, besides meaning that there is a dearth of written evidence for the period before the fourteenth century by comparison with the developing nations of central and western Europe, and even with Norway and Denmark. Nevertheless, the transformation of Sweden into a unified kingdom merits attention, and bears close comparison with similar developments in other parts of Europe, not only in Scandinavia, but in the regions of Scotland, Poland, Bohemia and Hungary.

The exercise of power and the nature of governing institutions have concerned historians of Europe for a long time. By and large Scandinavian historians have interpreted the nature of high medieval Scandinavian kingship and administration in the light of that of western Europe and the Empire, perceived to have been the model for the developing states of northern and east-central Europe in the high Middle Ages. Not only has it been assumed that a 'feudal' structure existed in Denmark after c. 1200 and Norway and Sweden after the mid-thirteenth century, but the conflicts of the period in which these kingdoms were transformed, the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Denmark and twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Norway and Sweden, have been seen all too often as battles for supremacy between kings attempting to increase their own authority at the expense of the nobility, a Gregorian Church attempting to assert its rights, and a traditionalist aristocracy.

Paradoxically, although the worst excesses of those who wished to prove the existence of a rich and powerful state equal to those of continental Europe in the Vendel and Viking Periods had been left behind by the end of the nineteenth century, by serious scholars at least, there was until recently a tendency among many historians to seek the origins of Sweden's medieval laws and administrative institutions in Sweden itself, if not in an ancient pan-Germanic culture of which Sweden was a part. In order to do this many of the provisions of

the late thirteenth-century and fourteenth-century law codes were transposed back into the Viking Period or even earlier. In the last quarter of the twentieth century attempts to reconstruct early royal administration became the province of archaeologists, using modern aids and methods and building on the hypotheses of earlier scholars. The emphasis of archaeology has now shifted to detailed research into cultural landscapes, with the recognition that administrative necessity is only one of the factors that determine settlement patterns and district boundaries. Nevertheless, while it has been accepted that many of the laws have their origins in christianised continental Europe, the arguments still continue over the origin of administrative units.

This study will attempt to give an overview of these problems, and to examine both the nature of the political conflicts and of kingship and administration in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and how a more cohesive state developed. The dates 1130 and 1290 are of course to some extent arbitrary, being the approximate date of King Sverker's accession, and that of the death of King Magnus Ladulås. They are convenient because the first marks the end of a particularly unstable and chaotic period, and the second the end of a reign in which a system of administration that lasted for the rest of the medieval period had been created and the culture of mainland Europe had been adopted by the Swedish nobility. If I have concentrated on the earlier part of this period, that is because it is the period for which evidence is poorest and about which there is most controversy. Of necessity, some of my conclusions are speculative and based on comparison with neighbouring lands for which there is more evidence, but where this is the case I have tried to make this clear and to deal in probabilities rather than imagination, and to give equal weight to theories of equal value. Because of the lack of written evidence and the difficulty in pinpointing the time at which pre-thirteenth-century institutions developed, it has been necessary in many instances to consider periods before 1130. There is little agreement even on when the separate regions of Sweden acquired a single king. For these reasons the second chapter is a survey of what is known about Sweden before the accession of Sverker. A brief history of the period 1130–1290 then follows, in order to give a context for succeeding chapters, which handle specific problems related to kingship, royal administration and state formation.

CHAPTER ONE

STATE FORMATION AND MEDIEVAL GOVERNMENT

1.1. *From Chiefdom to State*

Since 1950 the anthropological study of forms of human social and political organisation has progressed by leaps and bounds. Having begun with attempts to define the formal characteristics of different organisational structures, the emphasis has now shifted to examination of the functioning of political institutions and the methods by which elites maintain control over different social and economic activities. Correspondingly, aided by advances in scientific dating methods, archaeologists have abandoned the old preoccupation with typology and dating and seek to interpret physical remains within their wider social context. In many countries archaeology is now considered a branch of anthropology. The modern archaeologist, or at least those who do not deny that the systematic survey and observation of changing landscape patterns can give us an insight, into not only how human societies were organised but how people thought, now enters the fields of cultural geography and environmental and social studies.[1] The interpretation of physical phenomena is inevitably subjective, and as such must be open to re-interpretation, but, to return to the debate that was begun by the so-called 'processual' archaeologists in the 1960s, there seems little point in spending time, effort and money solely to establish a chronology of artefacts and structures. The debates that surround 'processual' and 'post-processual' archaeology, essentially about the extent to which generalisations can be made and the level of physical evidence required to interpret landscapes, are (fortunately) beyond this volume.[2] A related debate

[1] A 'landscape' is taken to incorporate both natural and human-made features.

[2] See Renfrew and Bahn 1996 pp. 36–44, for a summary of these concepts. Unfortunately much of the terminology used by those who espoused the 'New Archaeology' of the 1960s was pseudo-scientific, if not outright jargon, and archaeology has not entirely escaped from this since. Since pioneers of processual archaeology such as Lewis Binford placed heavy emphasis on theorising and testing of hypotheses in true scientific fashion, they recommended the exclusion of history, a

concerns the extent to which theorizing about a particular culture of region can only be grounded in a detailed study of all landscapes and remains within it. For instance, while some accept the use of ethnohistory to illuminate the culture of apparently similar societies in an earlier time or a dissimilar environment, others do not. Such difficulties touch upon the theme and period studied here, as written evidence gives at best an incomplete picture and state formation cannot be studied in isolation from social and economic history.

The majority of pre-state societies have left few written records, although aspects of many have been recorded by writers from more advanced societies that have existed concurrently. Unfortunately there were not many of these writers, many of their works have not survived, and references to peoples beyond the borders of their own polity were usually made only when the people in question interfered in it.[3] Written sources for early medieval Europe may be more plentiful than they are for the classical world, but they are still rare and were usually written by a limited number of people from a privileged background, and often from a narrow perspective. In many ways the sources for Scandinavia before 1100, during what is often termed a proto-historic period, are analogous to those for the peoples outside the Greek and Roman orbit in the classical period, in that they see Scandinavia as a little-known and often uncivilized region. By the Viking Period, c. 800–1050 AD, we may read un-Christianised for uncivilized. In the twelfth century Sweden had only recently been Christianised, at least in name, and was barely emerging from prehistory; only during that century would a literate clergy be introduced permanently into the region. The written sources for Sweden from 1100 to 1250 are almost as poor as those for Denmark and Norway in the Viking Period. The historian is therefore confronted with a similar problem to that faced by the archaeologist

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culturally constructed concept that distracts from interpretation of the archaeological record. In the 1980s certain archaeologists, such as Ian Hodder, reacted against aspects of processualism, and a heated debate began. In the 1990s Hodder suggested the term 'interpretive archaeologies' for their ideas, in place of 'post-processual', since the ideas of the two camps were often quite closely related.

[3] Throughout this work the term 'polity' is used to designate the highest order autonomous socio-political unit in the region in question, as defined by Renfrew. 'Polity' does not imply any specific degree of complexity or scale of organisation, and could therefore be a chiefdom or an empire, a village or a huge area encompassing half of Europe or Asia Minor. See Renfrew 1986 pp. 2–3.

considering comparative ethnohistory—to what extent can the history of neighbouring and apparently similar kingdoms be used to infer what may have occurred in Sweden?

It is not the intention here to become too embroiled in the detailed criteria adopted by different scholars when discussing specific aspects of the problem of state formation, but rather to define the parameters used in this study with reference to some of them. Definitions of socio-political structure fall broadly into two categories: those that emphasise stratification and those that are based on structures of power. The majority of anthropologists who follow the first path have been inspired by the work of Marx and Engels, who argued that social classes were formed as a result of unequal control over resources, and the state is formed when the elite class creates a structure to maintain its control over means of production. The state is thus a repressive structure born of conflict between social groups. Marxist theory has been modified in various ways since the nineteenth century. A similar type of theory, for instance, was developed by Morton Fried, who stressed the importance of unequal access to resources between different kinship groups, resulting in conflict and the emergence of control mechanisms outside the kin or clan structure.[4] Other anthropologists agree that state structures arise largely as a result of conflict, but between communities or even individuals rather than classes or clans. Pressures that can result in socio-political change, however, although they may have the potential to cause conflict, can also result in closer integration. An assortment of different processes that can lead to increased integration of political structures has been emphasised by different anthropologists and archaeologists. Robert Carneiro suggested that conflict, or the threat of it, could result from scarce resources and expanding population within a restricted territory (from which surplus population has no opportunity to move). This may be resolved by internal social reorganisation, so that more powerful elite groups subordinate others.[5] Alternatively, developing long-distance trade could bring about a redistribution of wealth and services and the creation of a bureaucracy to manage this.[6] Similar elite dominance could result from control of craft production surpluses

[4] Fried 1960 and 1967.
[5] See, for instance, Carneiro 1970, and Cohen 1977.
[6] Polanyi 1956 pp. 243–61, and Upham 1990.

or intensification of agricultural production.[7] In most cases, however, it is probable that more than one of these causes would play its part, the relative importance of different factors varying from region to region. In east-central and northern Europe between 900 and 1200 AD the phenomenon of secondary state formation was predominant, brought about by pressure from kingdoms that had been established earlier.

During the 1960s and early 1970s anthropologists and archaeologists developed a four-stage model for the evolution of social organisation: band, tribe, chiefdom and state.[8] Broadly speaking, and with reference to several of these works, the evolutionary stages are as follows: in a band society the basic units of organisation are groups of less than fifty people, all related by blood or marriage, living by hunting and gathering and operating without any form of authority over other bands. In a tribal society, also defined by Elman Service as a segmentary society, social units are still usually linked by kinship, but are frequently settled in an agricultural society organised in permanent villages, possibly with inter-tribal association for exchange or religious ceremonies. In a chiefdom society a hierarchy develops, based on kinship and usually with a hereditary leader, who often has religious functions. Increased craft specialisation, central accumulation and redistribution of wealth, with the construction of large monuments, fortified centres and ritual centres, are hallmarks of this phase. A leader may act as the modal point for religious rites and collection and redistribution, and may use these to gather around him a military following, but there is no formal apparatus of repression. Leadership is exercised through regional institutions, usually with general authority in a variety of matters. Leaders and their immediate followers are the main beneficiaries of wealth redistribution, and often display this conspicuously, restricting the flow of luxury goods to the rest of the population. Such leaders are not, of course, always defined by the title 'chief' in written historical sources, many being called 'kings' (Latin *reges*), 'princes', or corresponding names.

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[7] For instance, see D'Altroy 1985, and Hastorf 1993.

[8] See, for instance, Service 1971, and Flannery 1972. These theories have been expanded and adjusted in several later works: Cohen and Service [eds] 1978, Claessen and Skalník [eds] 1978, Claessen 1981, and Johnson and Earle 1987. A strong early influence on these works was Fried's *The Evolution of Political Society*.

With the development of the state, hierarchy becomes increasingly fixed into at least two social classes, the leaders of states in their early phases usually being kings or emperors. The elites are no longer related to those they govern. The state is marked by the development of central bureaucracy, tribute, taxation, law codes and a common ideology that reflects this organisation, usually a religion administered by a priestly class. Institutions become increasingly specialised, with separate ones responsible for defence and aggression against neighbours (and sometimes for internal repression), the management of the state finances and tribute or tax-gathering, and religion. Concrete manifestations are the growth of towns with public buildings and more-or-less permanent military forces. The elite displays its wealth both through personal possession of luxury goods and the financing of public projects. States are limited to a defined geographical area, over which they claim exclusive right, but their populace may be multi-ethnic.

These ideas have since been expanded and re-interpreted. Both the rate of change in social organisation and the precise form it takes have obviously varied from region to region, since these are dependent on a wide variety of environmental and human factors. Without any significant change in environmental conditions and with a low population density and no external pressure from other cultures, Australian aboriginal society remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years while other human societies were transformed. In Ireland during the period covered by this study, the High Middle Ages, confederacies of chiefdoms (the *mór túath* of the law texts) had developed, unified by agreement and often supposedly kinship.[9] Nevertheless, there is general agreement that they failed to develop into states, despite pressure from the Vikings and subsequently from England, a circumstance often attributed to the nature of subsistence, a dependence on stock-rearing rather than agriculture, together with an entrenched conservatism.[10] Population size and density relative to available resources are clearly significant in determining social change,

[9] I use the term 'High Middle Ages' to refer to the period 1050–1300, as it normally does in English, German and Scandinavian historiography. In French history the corresponding term refers to the Carolingian period, c. 800–1000.

[10] See Gibson 1999 pp. 118–190, and Patterson 1999 pp. 129–30.

but attempts to establish numerical parameters when defining chiefdom and state have varied wildly, have often excluded many polities that fulfil the other functions of a state and have contributed little to the discussion.[11]

The evolutionary model discussed above has also been criticised as too one-dimensional. While it is generally the case over the whole span of human history that social organisation has evolved as above, at various times and in various regions the pattern has been reversed. Some states have devolved into smaller and less organised polities, or lost some of the attributes of statehood. Examples of this include the disintegration of the Egyptian Old Kingdom in the twenty-third century BC, and of a number of states in the eastern Mediterranean during the Bronze Age 'catastrophe' of c. 1200 BC, the collapse of the Roman Empire into smaller polities in the fifth century AD, and the abandonment of many lowland Maya city-kingdoms in the ninth century AD. It has also been argued that the centralisation model of state formation is not the only, or even the dominant, one. Whereas that particular form is pyramidal and exclusive, a corporate structure may develop that both legitimates and limits the power of bureaucrats, military leaders and political leaders through legal and ideological structures, as in many of the city-states of classical Greece and arguably some in medieval Europe too, from Italy to Novgorod. In a state it is also possible for economic, ideological and even military power to lie elsewhere than with those who hold political power, although, of course, it is not possible to separate these entirely, given that all are central to social organisation and interlinked. Nevertheless, in almost all the polities that arose in Europe between the collapse of the Roman Empire and 1500 AD there was a process of centralisation, albeit with periodic collapses and reverses.

In order to escape from the straitjacket of the four-stage evolutionary model, and sometimes on the basis that it imposed too many preconceived notions of social structure, various theorists have used

[11] For instance, Johnson and Earle have defined states as 'societies whose populations number in the hundreds of thousands or millions', which would exclude the city-states of Sumer, classical Greece and medieval Italy: see Johnson and Earle 1987 p. 246. Renfrew's theory that the area of early states, his 'early state modules', was always approximately 1500 km^2, is also difficult to sustain when talking of states that differed substantially from those he concentrated on in his study, the city-states of Etruria, Mycenaean Greece and the Maya: see Renfrew 1984 p. 85.

different definitions of social evolution. Johnson and Earle, for instance, speak of 'the family-level group' and 'the local group' and include 'archaic states' with chiefdoms that encompass large areas in 'regional polities'.[12] Van Creveld has simplified the classifications still further, speaking of 'tribes without rulers', 'tribes with rulers' and states.[13] There is always a danger of becoming mired in a terminological swamp, one of the reasons for such simplifications and the shift in emphasis from definition to function. Because of the difficulties in adapting it to local circumstance, some archaeologists researching specific regions have rejected the band-tribe-chiefdom-state model entirely, but it still has its uses as a basis for discussion, as long as it is used to illuminate rather than as a straitjacket within which different socio-political systems are made to fit.

To the basic band-tribe-chiefdom-state model can be added several other definitions of socio-political structures that may be used in a discussion of their development in northern and central Europe between 400 and 1300. Because the term hierarchy implied a centralized pyramidal structure, certain scholars introduced the term *heterarchy* to describe societies with several internal hierarchies that serve to weaken overall centrality. The model ties in with a recent increase in discussion of the nature of complex power structures and the resources and strategies employed by elites to maintain or increase their authority. In a heterarchy society comprises elements that do not simply exist within an ordered system of ranks or precedence as they would in a hierarchical system—there may be ranks and an order of precedence, but the position of a given group within it can vary. Alongside hierarchical (vertical) differentiation there is heterarchic or horizontal differentiation. In the words of Potter and King, a horizontal authority structure occurs 'when social elements are perceived to be functionally distinct but are either unranked or occur at equivalent rank within a hierarchic structure'.[14] Level of control is not necessarily proportionate to the size of a political structure, and hierarchy is not a prerequisite for the existence of large polities, as assumed by some scholars in the past. Many early empires

[12] Johnson and Earle 1987.
[13] Van Creveld 1999.
[14] Potter and King 1995, p. 7. On the general concept see especially Crumley 1995 pp. 1–5.

in the Near East were managed as heterarchies; even if the kingdom at the centre of the empire may have had a hierarchical structure, its king ruled other kingdoms by installing sub-kings and levying tribute and sometimes troops, but did not otherwise attempt to integrate them into a socio-political whole. Ultimately, the continued existence of the empire rested on its central kingdom's prestige and ability to defeat militarily the other polities within it, and if this weakened, the whole imperial structure was vulnerable; hence the periodic collapses of the Hittite Empire and the repeated 'conquests' of the same territories by Assyrian kings. Large or small, the survival of a heterarchy is much more dependent on the prestige and ability of the overall ruler, as it has less internal structure to maintain it. The heterarchy model has been used, for instance, by Bernard Wailes to describe the situation of early medieval Ireland, which is in many ways comparable to that of Vendel and Viking Age Scandinavia.[15]

Another useful definition of a specific type of socio-political structure is Colin Renfrew's 'peer polity', used by him to refer to regions with a number of distinct but approximately equal-sized and equally resourced polities, usually city states, that had developed a shared social and cultural identity alongside one another, partly through frequent interaction.[16] In this model social and economic exchange between the peer polities within the cultural region is of greater importance than relations with polities outside the region, a situation referred to as a core-periphery relationship. Frequently, there are sufficient internal regional links between the peer polities to bring about combined action in war, usually under the leadership of one polity. Although the model (which provided one basis for Renfrew's later 'early state modules') was originally applied to Near Eastern and eastern Mediterranean regions with city-states such as Sumer, Mycenaean Greece and Etruria, it has subsequently been applied to other regions, among them Anglo-Saxon England and Iron Age Scandinavia, by Richard Hodges and Carl Löfving.[17] Whether peer polities had similar socio-political and economic institutions in addition to a shared cultural identity is more difficult to say when only

[15] Wailes 1995 pp. 55–69.

[16] Renfrew 1984 and 1986. In the first work the polities were referred to as 'early state modules', later developed as 'peer polities' in the second.

[17] Hodges 1986 pp. 69–78, Löfving 1987 and 2001b.

material remains are available as evidence. Similar size, resources and culture would make this probable, but not inevitable; written sources tell us that some of the city-states of classical Greece were already developing different governmental systems by the time of the Persian invasions, even though they retained a shared identity that enabled them to unite against the Persian threat and that continued to be manifested in institutions such as the Delphic oracle or the Olympic games.

By the early Middle Ages, the majority of European polities were organised as chiefdoms or nascent states, although hunter-gatherer bands and tribes did still exist in north-central Scandinavia and the forest-tundra zone of what is now Russia. As regards the later Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, few would now argue that they constituted fully-fledged 'states' in the ninth century, even though kings are recorded in foreign sources, while most would agree that both Denmark-Norway and Sweden had reached this stage by 1550.[18] Between these periods, however, historians have been at variance with one another in their use of the term. The reason is largely that, consciously or unconsciously, they are adopting different definitions, some assuming that statehood has been achieved when most of the criteria they consider necessary for it have been met, others when only some have been met or all have been partially met, and still others when all have been fully met. Often these criteria are ill-defined.

Anthropologists and archaeologists have generally been more interested than historians in defining their criteria for different stages of socio-political development, but although there is much general agreement (as noted above), disagreement often occurs where they have attempted to further define the stages of chiefdom-state evolution in order to better analyse the perceived progression, resulting in varying classification of polities in the process of transformation. In 1978, for instance, Claessen, Gurevich and Seaton discussed 'undeveloped states' in Tahiti, Hawaii and Viking-Age Norway ('Old Norway',

[18] Klaus Randsborg and Else Roesdahl both asserted that a Danish state existed in the early Viking Age. Randsborg wrote that a state was 'a large, stable political unit with a high level of production'; even if these were characteristics of Denmark in the tenth century, which is debateable, it is now accepted that a state need not have any of them. Roesdahl measured statehood by various attributes which are now generally accepted as characteristic of chiefdoms as well as states. See Randsborg 1980 p. 7, and Roesdahl 1982.

somewhat ill-defined in time period in that work), but these are classed as chiefdoms in most other works.[19] The root of disagreement over classification of these polities is that many on the road to statehood do not fit easily into either category, chiefdom or state; as Christine Hastorf put it, archaeological models of state formation tend to focus on the being rather the becoming.[20] This difficulty applies to the majority of the polities of post-Roman or early medieval Europe, as well as many elsewhere and in earlier periods.[21] An undisputed characteristic of both chiefdom and state is that society is stratified, and stratification holds within it the potential for statehood to develop. Fried, one of the pioneer proponents of the stratified society, held that the development of differential relationships between members of society and its means of subsistence entailed fundamental changes in social and political organization.[22] Fried believed that the idea of such a society without some of the institutions of a state was wholly hypothetical, but his view on this has been challenged by Durrenberger, among others, who argued that thirteenth-century Iceland represented just that. Iceland may be one of the very few ancient or medieval pre-state societies that is well documented in contemporary sources, but it is possible that other chiefdom societies that are less well documented, for instance, in Iron Age Ireland and Scandinavia, could also fit into this category.[23] The experience of thirteenth-century Iceland would suggest, however, that Fried's contention that such a society would be inherently unstable might be correct. Fried's argument that the early 'stratified society' represents an incipient state has been adopted by a number of more recent anthropologists and archaeologists, among them Claessen and Skalnik and Kristiansen.

The intermediate stage between chiefdom and state is referred to, with special reference to Iron Age Europe, as a 'decentralised stratified society' by Kristiansen. It has the basic features of the state, but lacks its developed bureaucracy.[24] Chiefs or kings rule through a retinue of warriors, who exact tribute from farming communities that

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[19] Claessen and Skalník [eds] 1978.
[20] Hastorf 1993 p. 17.
[21] See, for instance, with reference to Mycenaean polities, Gilman 1991 pp. 164–66, and Ferguson 1991 pp. 173–74.
[22] Fried 1960 p. 721.
[23] Durrenberger 1992 and 1998 pp. 171–86.
[24] Kristiansen 1991 p. 19.

live in villages or farms scattered across the landscape. Specialised craft production, performed by both free craftsmen and slaves, is attached to elite patrons, and trading ports or inland trade centres are controlled by the rulers. Larger armies can be raised by calling on subject chiefs or kings to contribute their retinues. Such a relationship between ruler and subject chiefs, in which rulers in a given region acknowledge one of their number as superior (and which is common among peer polities) has strong similarities to that in a heterarchy. For Kristiansen, a key difference between central and northern European societies of the Iron Age and those of the earlier Bronze Age, which failed to develop into states, is the emergence of private landholding that is no longer based on kinship relationships, which provides a foundation for formalised taxation of the type that can ultimately sustain a bureaucracy.[25] Moreover, after the Iron Age Migration Period (c. 400–550 AD) wealth was no longer restricted to a small elite through recycling and deposition in the ground or in bogs and watercourses, practices that prevented any build-up of capital that could be invested in infrastructure.[26] Even if some cultural traits that contributed to state-building in the Later Iron Age and Middle Ages can be traced back to the Bronze Age, notably the formation of warrior elites, virtually all modern archaeologists who have specialised in Scandinavia now trace the beginning of the road to statehood to the Later Iron Age.[27]

As noted above, by and large historians have been less concerned with defining the state than anthropologists or archaeologists. Joseph

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[25] Kristiansen 1991 pp. 20–21. The decentralised stratified society is contrasted with the 'centralised archaic state', in which the pyramidal structure of the tribe is formalised into a theocracy, the ruling elite controlling access to the supernatural, the same beliefs that legitimised it, and controlling both trade and the distribution of surplus produce through tribute via subject chiefs. Ferguson suggests that Mycenaean polities may have been of this type (1991 p. 173), and that it is characteristic of many Near Eastern and 'Asiatic' polities such as Old, Middle and New Kingdom Egypt or early China. The temple economies of South-East Asia may also fall into this category; see, for instance Higham 1989 pp. 239–42. However, Higham's adoption of the term *mandala* for these polities (following the example of O.W. Wolters), in order to avoid preconceived western or Chinese ideas of statehood involving fixed territories and bureaucracies, demonstrates the difficulties that many regional specialists have in working with general models.

[26] Kristiansen 1998 p. 418.

[27] For instance, see Hedeager 1992, Thurston 2001, Solberg 2000, and Hyenstrand 1996. How changes in socio-political structures during the Iron Age and Viking Period may relate to those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Sweden is considered in more detail in chapter 2.

Strayer, for instance, admittedly writing in the 1960s, argued that 'most attempts to make such a definition have not been very satisfactory'. He went on to say that 'a state exists chiefly in the hearts and minds of its people'.[28] This may be confusing 'nation' with 'state', and is arguably a product of his concentration on his own era of expertise, the Middle Ages, when the modern European state began to emerge. However, Strayer then went on to identify the factors that brought about the formation of these long-lasting and stable states, and his study still makes a good basis for discussion of this today. As key factors in this development he identified stability of location in time and space, the creation of a legal system that was recognised and supported by the majority of the population, and the growth of an educated and literate class capable of acting as judicial functionaries and administrators and keeping records. Long-term occupation of a given region by a single ruling family's polity allowed the possibility of it being identified with the land, and ultimately taking on a character of its own, no longer dependant on the person of its ruler. At the same time, lasting legal and administrative institutions also came to represent the polity. Magnates that might have had separatist tendencies slowly accepted the use of these structures to resolve their disputes, and in some cases even joined increasing numbers of lower nobility in seeking employment in them. On the one hand this greatly improved the chances of a dynasty's survival, and on the other the idea of loyalty to the nation, as opposed to its rulers alone, began to take root in the popular consciousness.

Doubts have been expressed about Strayer's concentration on England and France as the prime examples of state formation that others followed, and about the impression both of inevitability and approval of the process one gets from reading his essay.[29] To Strayer's factors could certainly be added a change in the concept of landowning, which Kristiansen argued began in the Iron Age, in which lordship became territorial rather than personal. With the advent of written culture and measured land units, the scene was set for taxation as opposed to tribute, as well as the change in attitude that enabled people to see the polity as 'place' rather than 'person'. It has also

[28] Strayer 2005 p. 5.

[29] See the forewords to the 2005 edition of Strayer's *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*, by C. Tilly and W.C. Jordan, pp. vii–xxviii.

been argued that the 'community of the realm', of which people of all classes began to see themselves as a part, developed earlier than has previously been supposed, and was facilitated by collective action arising from medieval concepts of custom and law.[30] Its development was therefore less dependent on territorialisation of the polity, and may have facilitated the establishment of more ubiquitous judicial and administrative organs, which in turn strengthened the community.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the medieval kingdoms of Europe did provide the foundations for large, stable polities encompassing a more or less fixed area of land and incorporating millions of people. The 'institutions' that bound tribal units together, a common mythology and cult, usually sustained by oral tradition and the construction of monuments as physical reminders, were not on their own capable of sustaining larger polities for the length of time that many of the modern states of Europe have existed. The construction of large Iron Age monuments such as burial mounds, although they could function as territorial markers, celebrated the person of the dead ruler rather than a polity, and reinforced the authority of his kin. Tribal confederations of the Migration Period, such as the Franks, Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Vandals fluctuated in numbers and composition and moved across Europe. They were bound together largely by their leadership, whereas modern states continue to function, and are recognised as continuing to exist by their people, even those who have no respect for the leader. Already in the High Middle Ages, when their kings were absent for long periods, polities such as England and France could continue to function with the queen or nominated nobles as his representatives. They were ruling through institutions that had achieved a degree of permanence and that were recognised and accepted by the bulk of the population, 'the community of the realm'. Furthermore, if the king died or suffered a shattering defeat, their kingdoms did not fall apart. The survival of France through the catastrophes of the Hundred Years War and the Black Death was testimony to the degree of solidity achieved by the Capetians in previous centuries.

Medieval people had no word for a socio-political entity that corresponded to 'state'. The Latin word *regnum*, to which corresponded

[30] Reynolds 1997 pp. 250–261.

the Scandinavian terms *kungarike* or *kungadöme* (English *kingdom*), incorporated the entire 'support network' of obligations and institutions that bound people to the king, the sum of royal rights and powers. The same concept occurs in the terms *jarladöme*, *hertigdöme* or *biskopsdöme*, referring to the authority of the jarl, *hertig* (*dux*/duke) or bishop. However, the *regnum* or kingdom also comprised a 'people' (Latin *populus, gens* or *natio*, terms that were interchangeable), defined by Reynolds as 'a natural, inherited community of tradition, custom, law and descent'.[31] Up to the 1960s many historians of Scandinavia assumed that Denmark, Norway and Sweden had become states when they first acquired a king recorded as having ruled a region approximating to that of the late medieval kingdoms, and the word *rike* (Danish *rige*), derived from historical sources, was often taken to imply statehood, but in the Early and High Middle Ages the territory was not what made the *regnum* or the *natio*, nor did *regnum* presuppose the existence of a royal bureaucracy.[32]

1.2. *The Nature of Politics and Government in the Early and High Middle Ages*

Any history that is restricted to a single kingdom inevitably reinforces an impression of its individuality because it is treated as a distinct entity. In addition, historians of medieval kingdoms, particularly historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, have been prone to approach their work from a national perspective and to take too little account of relevant work by their counterparts in neighbouring countries. On the other hand, many general works on the Middle Ages have tended to emphasise the similarities between kingdoms, particularly those that adhered to the Roman Church.[33] These kingdoms may have become too large and the political geography too complex for them to be considered a peer polity network, but there is no question that the Christian polities of Europe did

[31] Reynolds 1997 p. 250.

[32] In this work the terms 'realm' or 'kingdom' have been used in place of *rike*, to indicate a polity recognised as having one ruler, but not necessarily with the administrative organisation required for classification as a state.

[33] A recent example is Reynolds 1997.

share a common culture, even those of Latin and Orthodox persuasion, as result of their Roman inheritance. Religion touched every part of people's lives and the servants of both western and eastern churches were the main agents of written transmission. The Roman Church in particular recognized no boundaries to its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, differences inevitably emerged between regions with different rulers, especially when these corresponded to distinct cultural or linguistic zones. The modern nation-state was yet to emerge, but there are several instances of medieval kingdoms deliberately encouraging the settlement of people of their predominant language and culture in newly conquered territories to facilitate their assimilation.[34] Recognition of the new ruler as overlord and (where necessary) religious conversion by new subjects may have been deliberate aims in a way that adoption of 'national' culture was not, but in some instances replacement of former customs by new laws and even the adoption of the conquerors' predominant language were encouraged. Such expansionism, as imperial Roman activity had done earlier, could bring about the creation of ethnic identities and polities among the threatened where there had been none previously, and some of these could eventually become states in their own right.[35] A frontier that divided a population who spoke the same language or had other cultural affinities could be unstable, especially, as was often the case, where there had earlier existed a polity incorporating land on both sides.[36]

The problem of how government and politics functioned in the High Middle Ages has concerned historians throughout Europe, with some interesting national differences. Even if the problem has not always been defined in terms of the existence or non-existence of the state, a discussion that can degenerate into argument about definitions rather than the actual functioning of the medieval European polity, it is fair to say that state formation is now thought to have

[34] Two examples of such settlement from widely different regions and periods can be seen in the Byzantine repopulation of parts of Greece with Greek-speakers from the east after the Slavic migrations of the seventh century and the German settlement of lands formerly inhabited by Slavic speakers in the twelfth century. See chapter 12 on the Swedish settlement of Finland.

[35] The phenomenon known as secondary state formation.

[36] These include the former kingdom of Northumbria, divided by the Anglo-Scottish frontier, and the former kingdom of Burgundy, to which both German and French kings had a claim. See chapter 2 on the Danish-Swedish frontier zone.

happened more slowly than it once was. The majority of work on the working of Swedish medieval government has been done during the last sixty years. Notable in this has been the work of Folke Dovring and Ulf Sporrong on taxation, Herman Schück's on the Church and clerical servants in royal government and not least Birgitta Fritz's study of administration. Her work has concentrated on the period after 1250, for which there is relatively good written evidence. The origins and purpose of older administrative divisions and institutions is altogether more obscure and has attracted a vast literature from legal historians, linguists and archaeologists, and incidentally provided the opportunity for some to suggest that a relatively well-administered *rike* existed as early as the Vendel Period (c. 550–800 AD).

There are obviously many aspects to any discussion of state formation, which touch on economic and social change, religion, legal history and warfare. The relevant historiography of these is discussed in each chapter, but in this introductory section discussion is confined to the central and controversial problem of the nature of socio-political interaction: to what extent was there a bureaucracy, ordered ranks of seniority among nobility and royal servants, or a judicial and legal structure? In many ways this is a question as to how far the written word had permeated political culture. This is obviously key to any understanding of medieval government, and something that extant sources such as medieval histories, annals, letters or law-codes often only hint at; terminology that may appear to represent specific functions or offices as it might nowadays was often used in a very different way in medieval documents, sometimes in conscious imitation of Roman models. The fact that in the thirteenth century many of the king's advisors acquired titles that apparently indicated specific functions does not necessarily indicate, for instance, that they had carefully delineated responsibilities. Nor does the terminology for judicial or administrative officials in the law-codes clearly indicate that there was a regulated hierarchical structure to provincial government by the early fourteenth century. Because they mention taxes that had replaced military service owed to the king, the law codes have also misled many into assuming that the king and his agents had earlier been able to summon directly a large military force, drawn from the whole of Svealand, possibly the whole of Sweden, but the codes say little of forces at the disposal of other powerful landowners, or of the composition of fleets and armies that

went overseas. A developed bureaucracy and standing military forces are essential components of the state.

Scandinavian scholarship on the High Middle Ages (c. 1000–1250) has been heavily influenced by German, French and English scholarship on the period. Certain trends are therefore common in the historiography of both. Work in French, German and English has been more accessible to Scandinavians than vice versa. Possibly partly because of this, there has also been (at least until recently) a perception that the Scandinavian kingdoms, like those of east-central Europe, lagged behind France, Germany and England in the creation of a hierarchical and bureaucratic administration bolstered by a theocratic ideology of rulership; in other words, these kingdoms were assumed to have a periphery-core relationship with west-central Europe, particularly the Empire. It is very probable that that expansionist pressure from the south contributed to the creation of Denmark as a single polity, and undeniable that most Christian missions to northern and eastern Europe came from there, and also from England in the case of Scandinavia—what is less certain is whether changes in government, political relations and social structure after the Viking Period followed those of western Europe or occurred in parallel with them. There is no question that ecclesiastical institutions and personnel contributed to a strengthening of government, so much so that Ole Fenger, for instance, considered the Church *the* essential ingredient in Danish state formation.[37] Nevertheless, conversion of a kingdom to Christianity did not necessarily entail advances in royal administration or unity within it—it would be difficult to argue, for instance, that Scotland was any more united or effectively governed than the Scandinavian kingdoms in the mid-eleventh century, but its population had been nominally Christian for centuries. Conversely, in the fourteenth century Lithuania was unquestionably on the road to becoming a state, complete with theocratic rulership, when its rulers and much of its population were still pagan.[38]

[37] Fenger 1989.

[38] Lithuanian princes made good use of subjects trained by the Orthodox and Roman Churches, but before 1387 most of its rulers were pagan, and Gediminas (1315/16–1341/42) actively promoted pagan cults, although he did not attempt to convert Christians. See Rowell 1994, especially pp. 118–48.

To some extent those Scandinavian scholars who have taken the view that socio-political change in Scandinavia was imported were reacting against earlier scholarship from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, which sometimes projected the formation of the Scandinavian states back into the Iron Age and often saw medieval Scandinavia as having preserved elements of an archaic Germanic society, in which the kin-group played a much greater role than it did further south. In recent years the importance of the kin-group in forming political factions has been played down, partly because the Scandinavian system of 'bilateral' kinship meant that a very large number of kin relationships were given equal importance while almost everyone of note was related in some way to everyone else.[39] Kristiansen and Hedeager have suggested that land and property ownership was no longer based on kin even before the Viking Age. Scholarship of the late twentieth century emphasised the secondary nature of state formation and social change in medieval Scandinavia. In its most extreme form this can be seen in Elsa Sjöholm's *Sveriges medeltids lagar*, in which she suggests that there is virtually nothing in the medieval Swedish law-codes that relates to Scandinavian practice before the twelfth century and that almost everything can be traced back to Roman law and canon law.[40] A general view was that Western European 'feudal' traits were introduced only in the late twelfth (in Denmark) or thirteenth centuries, two centuries after they appeared in France, permeated society less and were relatively quickly subsumed by direct royal administration.

Both the view that France, Germany and England had developed strong hierarchical government by the High Middle Ages and the view that Scandinavia lagged behind and preserved aspects of a 'pre-feudal' society have been seriously undermined during the last thirty years. Most leading mid-twentieth century historians of the medieval west tended to see the social structure of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries as hierarchical. For the Belgian historian Francois Ganshof, the structure was based on feudal institutions that had a legal basis, whereas Marc Bloch saw the links between king and aristocracy as more personal, but both argued that the power held by local magnates was delegated by the king, who granted them benefices

[39] See, for instance, P. Sawyer 1994 pp. 43–46, and Vestergaard 1988.
[40] Sjöholm 1988.

or fiefs as his vassals.[41] As vassals they were bound to the king by ties of homage and military service, and lesser landowners were in turn their vassals. The institution of vassalage was supposedly rooted in the ties of loyalty of the Germanic warband modified by Gallo-Roman practice, combined with the granting of land as benefices or in precarial tenure by the Carolingian kings.[42] Historians have debated whether Carolingian granting of benefices was tied to a granting of office. Either way, by the tenth century authority in West Francia was extremely localised. A general view is that there was a deterioration in economic conditions, communications and transport in the ninth and tenth centuries, which made distant territories impossible to administer from the royal centre, while local magnates benefited from playing off rival Carolingian candidates for the kingship against one another and from the need for local defence against incursions by Vikings, Magyars and Saracens.[43]

The resulting 'feudal age', corresponding approximately to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, also supposedly contained the seeds that led to a growth in royal authority, in that ties of vassalage could be utilised and adapted by the king to strengthen his authority, through judicial means. The military aristocracy eventually became entrenched and made itself an exclusive caste or class through hereditary membership. Scholars differed on precisely when this happened, Bloch arguing that this transformation occurred in France during the twelfth century, whereas the leading modern successor of the French '*Annales* school' in medieval scholarship, Georges Duby, believes that it began in the previous century.[44] Duby's work shows clearly the change that has occurred in French medieval history on this period since the mid-twentieth century. Although Duby argues that

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[41] Ganshof 1964 and Bloch 1962.

[42] In the late Merovingian Period this system had first been used by Charles Martel, as mayor of the palace. Many of the lands were church property, but some was newly cleared or confiscated lands. Charlemagne later allowed churches to grant land as benefices themselves, and Charles the Bald allowed followers to bequeath benefices to their heirs in 877.

[43] Bloch attributed a major impact to these invasions, and thought that feudal institutions had arisen quite rapidly as a result. See Bloch 1962, vol. 1 p. 56.

[44] Duby 1991 p. 56. The so-called *Annales* school endeavoured to reconstruct history through a study of all documents and records to gather information on all sections of a population, not simply through the study of elite histories. To do this they examined temporal, spatial and behavioural changes with the use of concepts from anthropology, sociology and other social sciences.

territorial control was delegated by the king, he recognises that powerful landowners with their own retinues existed during the Carolingian period, arguing that the major changes of the eleventh century were the consolidation of nobles' territorial power with the construction of castles and the recognition of it in contemporary written (official) sources. The early *Annales* school saw the feudal age as a stage in the development of hierarchical government and a class society. Their model of socio-political change assumes an evolutionary progression, and may therefore be subjected to the same criticism as the Marxist model and anthropological state evolution models of the 1960s and 1970s discussed above. French history of this type assumed that prior to the 'feudal age' there was sufficient royal power to delegate authority and sufficient land to dispose of in return for service. There is no question that powerful rulers such as Charlemagne, Louis the Pious or Knud the Great (as king of England) could appoint subordinate nobles to govern territories on their behalf and remove others, but it is questionable how much their ability to do this depended on personal authority and support from other followers.

English historians of the same period tended to see the seeds of strengthened royal authority in a fully developed 'feudal' system superimposed by the Normans on an already existing Anglo-Saxon legal and territorial-administrative structure. According to this view, the Normans strengthened the English state by removing the overpowerful Anglo-Saxon earldoms and introducing a stronger legal framework to the relationship between king and noble vassal.[45] Aspects of this view were challenged from the 1960s onwards, after which many British historians emphasised continuity from the Anglo-Saxon period into the Norman period.[46] Despite the unusual circumstances that led to the creation of the 'Anglo-Norman' kingdom, involving a conquest and the wholesale replacement of the English upper nobility, English feudalism has also provided an example against which Scandinavian society was measured. In the English case it is arguable that land was given by the Norman kings in return for military service relatively frequently, but they had an entire 'new' kingdom at

[45] Stenton 1979, and Joliffe 1937. Joliffe described Anglo-Saxon England as 'lordship without feudalism' (p. 80). A forerunner of all these views of feudalism in England was William Stubbs's *A Constitutional History of England*: Stubbs 1897.

[46] See, for instance, Richardson and Sayles 1963, especially pp. 62–91. They emphasise that lordship in both periods was based on personal loyalty.

their disposal—in this sense it may provide a more valid comparison with a recently Christianised kingdom such as Hungary, where conquest also allowed Hungarian kings to divide up lands amongst their followers in return for military service during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[47]

German views of social structure have tended to differ from those of Belgian and French scholars.[48] Many modern German historians have reacted against the past excesses of those who wrote national (or nationalist) history, emphasising Germany's similarities to its western neighbours.[49] Nevertheless, there were significant differences in the way in which West and East Frankish regions developed after the division of the Frankish Empire between the sons of Louis the Pious in 743. The tenth-century Ottonian kings are often held to have retained a Carolingian-style government, in which offices were granted, but not as hereditary fiefs, while office-holders could be deposed for severe misdemeanours. Gerd Tellenbach, for instance, saw an aristocracy with its own military resources as having existed from at least the time of the late eighth-century Carolingian conquest, but believed that they held their lands and their power from the king.[50] However, even in the 1940s the assumptions of those who believed in an imperial hierarchy were questioned. Karl Werner and Walter Schlesinger both saw the nobility as private landowners who had always had their own military retinues and who originated from among the common folk, whose interests they often represented in opposition to the kings or emperors.[51] The *volk* argument may be spurious, but this was nevertheless a recognition that the German aristocracy generally held land as allods without feudal obligation.[52] To counter the power of such secular lords, both Ottonian and

[47] Rady 2000, pp. 28–33. In this case, according to Rady, Hungarian kings subsequently proceeded to divide up and donate royal lands, which thereby became smaller and fragmented.

[48] There were nevertheless those who emphasised the legal nature of the relationship between king and governed, partly because they were working back from the later Middle Ages: see, for instance, Mitteis 1975.

[49] For instance, Fuhrmann 1989, and Haverkamp 1988.

[50] Tellenbach 1939.

[51] Werner 1979 pp. 177, 225. See also Werner 1995.

[52] That the nobility may have presented themselves as representatives of the *volk*, as the English nobility did in Magna Carta, is certainly arguable, but it is harder to argue that they had as much in common with them socially as they did with the king.

Salian kings increased the authority of bishops and abbots by endowing them with judicial and military rights that were normally royal prerogatives.[53] As a result, both ecclesiastical and secular nobility became powerful territorial lords by the mid-eleventh century, on the basis of their extensive allodial lands. Kings, particularly during the Salian Period, began to rely increasingly on *ministeriales* as office-holders and soldiers. They received land, but it was easily alienated since their status was initially unfree.

A forerunner of many recent historians was Otto Brunner, who made studies of several local aristocracies. Although looking primarily at the thirteenth century and later, he argued that there were a number of local magnates with private means in the medieval German kingdom, of whom one was the overlord, the king or emperor. Like Tellenbach, he believed that the origin of noble property rights is to be sought in the Frankish period at the very latest.[54] Brunner was critical of many contemporary historians, arguing that they saw the Middle Ages in terms of modern thought and institutions. From his research into local aristocracies, he argued that medieval families or kinship-groups were in a state of permanent feud, vying with each other to improve their relative positions—not only disputes between rivals of equal status as landowners, but disputes between kings and lesser lords and even between kings were seen in these terms, and this outlook was incorporated into the laws of the later Middle Ages.[55] The feud was moderated by negotiation and agreement between factions. More recently, although looking at the German kingdom in an earlier period and from a different perspective, Stefan Weinfurter has also emphasised that it was the attempt of the Salian emperors, beginning with Konrad II (1024–39), to create a hierarchical structure (or perhaps, in their eyes, to restore it) that led to their problems. The German nobility saw their traditional rights as under attack from a government that had replaced cooperation with tyranny, and this enabled Pope Gregory VII to secure allies from among them in

[53] The so-called *Reichskirche*. This was once thought to be a more-or-less systematic process, but the level of authority and the extent of powers given varied wildly: see Reuter 1982.

[54] Brunner 1984 p. 275. Brunner was attacked by some contemporaries for writing fantasy history, in other words, history that was not grounded on the solid foundations of 'facts' extracted from extant documents and that attributed motives and attitudes beyond mere material gain and power to medieval people.

[55] Brunner 1984 pp. 1–35.

his battle with Heinrich IV—in other words, the cohesion of the Kingdom of Germany depended on cooperation between king and aristocracy, and of rival aristocratic families with one another.[56] The steady change in emphasis of German history-writing can be seen in the work of Timothy Reuter, who suggests that the hierarchic structure of the Ottonian and Salian 'state' (a term whose appropriateness he questions) was more apparent than real; it is found in the names of office holders and the records of commands sent out by the king, but on the other hand there is very little record of legislation, and the majority of decisions were taken at assemblies of nobles, who were not appointed by the king.[57]

In recent years such a collective socio-political structure has been proposed not just for Germany, but for France and England as well, notably by Susan Reynolds.[58] According to her, historians who had argued that high medieval society was hierarchical were transposing the social structures of the thirteenth century and later back into the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but in that era society was not held together by vertical or legal ties, but by personal links and a shared socio-political culture. There was a hierarchy, in that some titles were regarded as more prestigious than others, but it did not have legal status. The granting of his own land by a king to a vassal was rare, and landowners instead established links to more powerful nobles by using their own private land, the allod. This was granted to their overlord, frequently the king, and received back by the vassal in the form of a benefice, the whole exchange having a symbolic nature. Indeed, Reynolds has emphasised that the term *vassus* implied social status, rather than any position in a hierarchy, let alone with legal connotations.[59] As Brunner had argued, the king and his relatives and other magnates were in a state of constant feud. Alliances were made to consolidate power and as a means of avoiding conflict, being denoted by a variety of terms such as *societas, gulda* or *fraternitas*.

The way in which these agreements functioned has been studied by a series of historians who have looked at individuals and their interaction on a local level, such as Karl Schmid, Dominique

[56] Weinfurter 1999.
[57] Reuter 1991 pp. 208–20. In an earlier work, the hierarchical nature of government receives more emphasis (Reuter 1979 p. 11).
[58] Reynolds 1994.
[59] Reynolds 1994 pp. 22–24, 48–57, 91–105, 480.

Barthélemy, Patrick Geary and Barbara Rosenwein.[60] Eleanor Searle's study of Norman political culture also gives a picture of feud and alliance in the context of kinship relationships and loyalties, although the impression is given that Normandy was more exceptional than it probably was.[61] A culture of using legal methods to resolve disputes between rival groups did not yet exist in the High Middle Ages, even when the legal framework to regulate socio-political interaction was available, especially as recourse to legal methods invariably resulted in a decision that favoured one party and disadvantaged the other. A more satisfactory, and therefore probably lasting, agreement was one that could preserve the honour, security and power of both parties. The way in which such agreements were made and the nature of political relationships has also been re-evaluated by Gerd Althoff, particularly with reference to the government of the Ottonian kings; the making of such agreements was usually reinforced by ritual and religious symbolism, and often sealed by the creation of a family link, a marriage alliance.[62] Political relations were therefore governed by unwritten convention rather than contractual obligations of the type encountered in modern civil law. Even in the later Middle Ages, 'contracts' of homage and fealty embodied a concept of loyalty.[63]

Within the last two decades an increasing amount of work on parts of medieval Europe that had hitherto been poorly served has appeared. Some of this gives a very different assessment of power relationships than those within England, France or Germany. One such is Lisa Wolverton's study of high medieval Bohemia and Moravia. As in Germany in the same period, the term *feudum* is very rare in documents, and wealth appears to have been divided among sons and perhaps daughters when a freeman died.[64] Wolverton sees medieval government essentially as interaction between duke and 'freemen', with the Church as an independent player.[65] Because the duke had amassed so much power by the end of the twelfth century, including

[60] Geary 1985, Barthélemy 2000, Schmid 1993 and Rosenwein 1999.
[61] Searle 1988.
[62] Gerd Althoff 2004 p. 202.
[63] Brunner 1984 pp. 350–91.
[64] Wolverton 2001 pp. 20–21.
[65] Wolverton 2001 pp. 106–09.

the sole right to build castles, any kinship or friendship ties among powerful freemen were subsumed by their need to present a common front to him. Oaths of fidelity were not sworn amongst friends or to the duke, and magnates had little interest in feuding. When they did fall out with each other, freemen invariably appealed to the duke as mediator.[66] The Church had different interests from powerful freemen, whose lands were subject to confiscation in a way that its were not, and rarely made common cause with them, nor necessarily with the dukes, whose right to appoint ecclesiastical officials was always curtailed. Linguistically and ethnically Bohemia had a relatively homogenous population, and its settled lands were bounded by natural barriers, which probably contributed to these exceptional circumstances, but the situation in another medieval *regnum* in the shadow of a more powerful neighbour—Scotland—was very different. Besides being faced with the usual dynastic rivalries, its rulers had to contend with diverse topography, languages and political loyalties. Scottish kings did grant fiefs in return for military service, but this was a slow process that only gathered pace in the late twelfth century.[67] What bound these regions together was a single king, who claimed his inheritance first from the ancient kings of the Picts and Scots, and subsequently from overlordship over the extinct line of Strathclyde and the part of Northumbria that had been isolated by the Viking conquest of its southern part.

In general, the more recent the scholarship, the closer the creation of all the European states has moved to our own time, and this is particularly true of Scandinavia. Like most of their contemporaries in western Europe, from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s Scandinavian historians tended to look at their history from a national perspective. Denmark, Norway and Sweden have often been considered together in studies of the Viking Period, the period in which Scandinavians exerted their greatest influence abroad. The Scandinavia of this era has attracted the attention of many non-Scandinavian historians who have often treated Viking overseas expansion and certain related subjects such as Nordic paganism as phenomena common to the whole region. By contrast, for a good part of the twentieth century the internal development of the three

[66] Wolverton 2001 p. 62.
[67] Barrow 2003 pp. 252–55.

kingdoms and the high medieval period that followed the Viking era have tended to remain the province of Scandinavian scholars. Although this Scandinavian historiography was influenced by that of western Europe, it therefore remained insulated from outside scrutiny.

A key period in the development of Scandinavian historiography was the early twentieth century, when several influential historians abandoned the more extreme national-romantic viewpoints. The brothers Lauritz and Curt Weibull (1870–1962 and 1886–1990 respectively) undoubtedly made a valuable contribution to Swedish and Danish historiography through their insistence on a 'scientific' examination of evidence, accepting and analysing only hard information in source material and thus excluding the distortions introduced by the interpretations of its writers. Whilst this had the beneficial effect of undermining many of the more imaginative and idealistic motives attributed to individuals by earlier Scandinavian historians, and encouraged careful research, it also implicitly rejected most of the judgements of medieval writers as invalid, attributing only self-interested 'rational' motives for the actions of medieval people that were arguably based on the preoccupations of ambitious modern people—the search for wealth and power. According to this view, medieval folk tended to act within self-interested groups with common interests, namely the king and his administrators, the secular nobility, the Church and the peasantry.

Such a group-oriented approach was even more characteristic of the contemporary Norwegian historians Edvard Bull (1881–1932) and Halvdan Koht (1873–1965). As Marxists, they saw the development of Norwegian kingship and the state in terms of class allegiance, to which Koht added the ingredient of kinship solidarity. Thus the groups that battled for power in Norway during the early Middle Ages were formed from people with similar social origins who adopted a similar ideology. The Marxist interpretation was elucidated most clearly by one of Bull's pupils, Andreas Holmsen.[68] He argued that wealthy landowners (both secular and ecclesiastical) created the Norwegian state, the king being no more than their tool, having achieved their pre-eminence as a result of an increase in population and a consequent shortage of land that also created an impoverished landless proletariat. The latter resisted during the twelfth and

[68] Holmsen 1977.

early thirteenth centuries, allied with the peasantry, but the ultimate victors in the so-called 'borgerkrigene' (civil wars) were the landowners.[69] A similar theory to Holmsen's was espoused by the Soviet-trained historian Aron Gurevich, who argued that property was increasingly concentrated in the hands of crown, Church and magnates during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At the same time there was a rise in tenancy, which Gurevič attributed to the division and allocation of land to them by impoverished lesser freeholders.[70] The Swedish historian Thomas Lindkvist also gave a similar interpretation of Scandinavian societal change in the same period, but attributed the rise in tenancy to the freeing of slaves.[71] Neither study made any real attempt to analyse the nature of government and politics within the elite, a criticism which may be more fairly levelled at Gurevich than Lindkvist, since his work was specifically concerned with the Scandinavian *landbor* (rent-paying tenants).[72]

Holmsen's theories have been heavily criticised during the last thirty years. Kåre Lunden has seen the wars of twelfth-century Norway primarily as a struggle between factions that were organised around kinship-groupings and personal friendship or clientship, and regards the 'class struggle' as anachronistic in that organised labour and national movements are characteristic of modern rather than medieval society, presupposing a national state in the first place.[73] Although Norwegian historians since Holmsen have generally accepted that no

[69] Holmsen 1977 pp. 190–250. The term *borgerkrigene* (civil wars) is now considered anachronistic, since it presupposes an existing united polity before fragmentation.

[70] Gurevich 1977 pp. 45–68.

[71] Lindkvist 1979 pp. 129–50

[72] Fortunately, the tendency to see the Scandinavian kingdoms in terms of theories developed by French, English or German historians about their own regions has diminished. Comparison between different regions can be a useful tool, but discussion in these terms had often dominated the writing of Scandinavian medieval history without contributing much to it. For instance, those who have sought to define high medieval Scandinavian society as 'feudal', as in the cases of Gurevich and Lindkvist mentioned above, have invariably redefined it to fit what they regarded as special Scandinavian circumstances, notably the existence of a legally free peasantry. The term 'feudalism' has similarly been applied to non-European societies such as those of Sassanian Persia and medieval India and Japan. It is arguable that if the definition of feudalism is widened to include any mode of production with two classes, one largely engaged in agriculture and the other an elite consuming its products, it becomes too vague to be useful.

[73] Lunden 1976.

Norwegian state existed until the mid-thirteenth century at the earliest, some have still looked at the *borgerkrig* period in the light of later developments. Knut Helle, while demonstrating convincingly that rival factions did not correspond to Holmsen's pattern, has sought for traces of later government in the twelfth century and earlier. He argues, for instance, that the wars of the twelfth century contributed to the development of national taxation, as the rival leaders had to devise new methods of acquiring wealth to reward their military followings. The state was essentially a product of cooperation between king and nobility.[74] However, unlike Lunden, Helle did not see the Church as part of the apparatus of royal power in the thirteenth century.

In contrast to the views of Helle on twelfth-century Norway, Swedish historians have generally assumed that the twelfth- and thirteenth-century wars between rival claimants to the Swedish kingship hindered the development of national institutions. Although the generation of Swedish historians that followed the Weibulls in the mid-twentieth century did not adopt the overt sociological interpretations of their Norwegian contemporaries, they nevertheless saw the struggles that characterised the era in which the kingdom of *svear* and *götar* was consolidated, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as a battle between factions (or 'parties') that took ideological standpoints. For instance, K.G. Westman argued that they took pro- and anti-Gregorian Church stances, while Lönnroth thought the main division of opinion was between those who supported a centralised state headed by the king and those who wished to retain the ancient privileges of the nobility and therefore only weak government with an elected king, what might now be called a heterarchy.[75] There is no question that some conflicts of the High Middle Ages had an ideological aspect when opponents took different stances on matters that concerned the Church, which in the last resort could turn to violent means to suppress movements its hierarchy considered heretical. Some of the most vicious conflicts of this period resulted, for instance in southern France between 1206 and 1228, the so-called Albigensian Crusade. However, there is a danger that medieval political factions, rather like Holmsen's social classes, are seen in modern terms, almost as political parties.

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[74] Helle 1974.
[75] K.B. Westman 1952, and Lönnroth 1959b pp. 13–29.

Unlike the Weibulls or the Norwegian Marxists, Sverre Bagge has been prepared to accept that the evidence of the kings' sagas is valid in determining the nature of political struggles, even if it has to be treated with care. Rather as scholars such as Fichtenau have for Germany, Bagge has attempted to evaluate how people of the time saw their own society.[76] Kinship played its part in the outcome of political struggles, in that members of rival factions endeavoured to avoid killing one another, but it did not necessarily determine the make-up of the factions. In this, friendship and alliances, often between those who had something material to gain from them, played a greater role.[77] A leader's personal qualities were vitally important in holding a faction together. Only during the reign of Sverre (1188–1202) did ideology begin to play a part, when he found himself in conflict with the Papacy. Like Lunden, Bagge suggests that the rise of internal administration in Norway was largely due to force of circumstances—the old methods of raising wealth by plunder and paying off followers were no longer possible.[78] The same has been said of Sweden by Thomas Lindkvist.[79] Viking-style raids continued in the Baltic, but had to be supplemented by other methods of finance.

The shadow of Bloch and the 'Anglo-French model' hung over most mid-twentieth century histories of the newly Christianised kingdoms of the High Middle Ages, in that they tended to assess the situation in their own regions by searching for similarities to and differences from it. This is particularly true of the Danish scholars Aksel E. Christensen and Helge Paludan, who both argued that the medieval Danish aristocracy had owned land before this period, but that similarities to feudal Europe developed in the late thirteenth century, when the king began to award land (*pantelen*) in return for knight service. This scenario has similarities to what is often seen as the origins of the 'feudal system' in Francia, when Charles Martel and his Carolingian descendants began to award land to their followers in return for service, instead of booty as the Merovingians had. But whereas that is usually seen as a way of integrating these followers into the socio-political structure, Christensen and his 'school'

[76] Bagge 1998, Fichtenau 1991.
[77] Bagge 1991 pp. 112–23.
[78] Lunden 1976 pp. 60–62, Bagge 1998 p. 152.
[79] Lindkvist 1988.

saw the change in Denmark as negative—it occurred under pressure from members of the king's military following, called the *hird* by the end of the Viking Period, at a time when the king was weakened and under attack from both secular nobility and Church.[80] As a result the nobility was then transformed into a hereditary class. The root of this negative view of feudalisation in Denmark is that Christensen and Fenger saw the Valdemarian kingdom (1157–1243) as a golden age, in which king, nobility and Church worked together. Their view was that the king commanded not only his *hird*, but acquired the possibility to raise the general population as his military force as early as the twelfth century, and that the real origins of royal bureaucracy lay in the reign of Valdemar I Knudsen ('the Great', 1157–82). Danish historians of the late twelfth century such as Sven Aggesen and Saxo Grammaticus were seen largely as royal propagandists, a view successfully challenged by Birgit Sawyer in the 1980s.[81] Before Valdemar I's reign, the removal of successive kings within a few years during the struggles of the Danish *borgerkriger* (1134–57) was seen partly in terms of strife between hierarchical kings who often sought support from the kings of Germany and kings that cooperated with the Church and Danish nobility. Valdemar Knudsen's victory represented a victory for the latter. A similar view that rival dynastic families had opposing views of whom the king should favour had also been expressed in Sweden, but in this case the rivals were seen as supporting the Gregorian Roman Church and royal power on the one hand and aristocratic power on the other.[82]

The idea that rivals for the Danish throne had different ideas of kingship was attacked by Carsten Breengaard, who carefully analysed written sources to show that there was no evidence for this, but concluded that opposing factions must therefore have been based on personal loyalty and kinship.[83] This left his book open to criticism.

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[80] See Christensen 1943 and 1976. Also see Christensen et al. [eds] pp. 272–75, and for the strengthening of king's administration in Valdemar I's period, pp. 342–43. In her section on the thirteenth century, Paludan traces the origins of Valdemar II's administration to Valdemar I's reign; see pp. 393–94. In favour of Christensen, he was right to point out that twelfth-century Denmark did not fit the *Annales* school feudal model. The picture of France and England given by Reynolds suggests that in fact they were more like Denmark.

[81] B. Sawyer 1985 pp. 685–705.

[82] See Chapter 3.

[83] Breengaard 1982.

A more thoroughly researched challenge to earlier views of the administration of Valdemar I and his predecessors has been made by the Swedish scholar Lars Hermanson, whose study has suggested that government was dependent on alliances and agreements between networks that were founded on kinship and friendship and that did not reflect a division of interests between king, Church and secular nobility.[84] Valdemar I and his successors may have tried to promote a more exalted image of kings as Christ-like rulers above their subjects, but neither Saxo, nor apparently the powerful noble families, accepted this. Hermanson's picture of twelfth-century Danish politics has many resemblances to that given of Norway by Bagge and of Ottonian and Salian Germany by Althoff. Niels Lund has also questioned the level of administration and control, particularly over military resources, exerted by Valdemar I, let alone his predecessors.[85] The internal struggles that followed the death of Valdemar II (1241) have also been seen largely as the result of straightforward dynastic disputes, rather than as a systematic undermining of royal power by the aristocracy, and the factions that fought against one another as followers of rivals for the kingship.[86] For all that, the aristocracy undoubtedly extracted privileges in return for their support, as witnessed by numerous documents, and thereby became an exclusive class.

There have also been two valuable studies of Iceland in the period 1000–1300, for which sources are quite plentiful, even if problematical in that many of the sagas deal with a 'heroic' past. Icelandic chieftains were in a more or less constant state of feud, either suppressed or open. William Ian Miller's 'ethnohistory' of saga Iceland shows how social constraints of kinship, friendship and law functioned. Without the coercive power of a higher central authority, the boundaries were set through written and unwritten social and legal rules.[87] The common origin of Iceland's population and its shared set of values and norms prevented uncontrolled violence. Jon Viðar Sigurðsson's study of chieftains in Iceland suggests that their power was based on ties of friendship and dependence—farmers with lesser wealth put themselves in this position in return for protection

[84] Hermanson 2000.
[85] Lund 1993 and 1996.
[86] Hørby 1977 and 1989.
[87] Miller 1990.

and support. This system had its own momentum and caused a reduction in the number of chieftaincies with a corresponding increase in the wealth of the remaining chieftains, who became accepted as their representative at political or legal gatherings. But the chieftain was also dependent on those farmers counted among his friends—if he failed to defend them, they could transfer to another chieftain's allegiance. Until the Norwegian King Håkon IV Håkonsson's subjection of the commonwealth, Iceland had no king, but Sigurðsson suggests that the political relationships of its chieftains bear comparison with those of Norway, Sweden and Denmark before the consolidation of royal power in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[88] In many ways the strategies and social obligations of the chieftains, albeit in a near subsistence level economy of free farmers, are also comparable to those of the aristocracy of high medieval mainland Europe, perhaps more so than historians cared to think until the researches of recent decades.

When Iceland's commonwealth ended as a result of the machinations of Håkon IV, and its people became his subjects, it was not simply a matter of naked aggrandisement. Håkon had suggested that it was unnatural for Icelanders to live without a king. Suffice it to say here that for medieval people outside Iceland the king (or other prince) was the embodiment of the polity, the guarantor of order. But medieval politics and 'political theory' were inextricably bound up with the sacral, with religion—this explains why Ernst Kantorowicz wrote about 'political theology' in his classic study of 1957.[89] In *The King's Two Bodies* he began with the ideas of Tudor jurists and worked back, emphasising (as he did in his other works) the continuity between ancient and medieval worlds. Unlike some of the other works of Brunner's era that tried to delve into the medieval mentality, Kantorowicz's book on medieval thought was generally (but not universally) well received when it first appeared. A recent study of the public ritual that surrounded kingship from Byzantium to the Renaissance and even beyond is Sergio Bertelli's *The King's Body*, which draws on a great deal of more recent anthropological research.[90]

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[88] Sigurðsson 1999b pp. 214–20.
[89] Kantorowicz 1997.
[90] Bertelli 2001.

Few modern historians would disagree with the view that in the symbolic world view of the Middle Ages there was little distinction between ritual and religion, which pervaded everything. History was understood as a divinely planned sequence of events. Even before Charlemagne's coronation as emperor western European courts had sought to imitate that of Byzantium, which inherited so much from Rome. The public appearances of kings and many of their private activities too were steeped in ritual through which kings were associated with the divine. Iconography and an increasing quantity of written tracts promoted the same image. There is not space here to list all the work that has been done on specific aspects of iconography that emphasised the Christ-like nature of the king, or on medieval 'political' writings, nor that on the question of possible links between Christian and pre-Christian 'sacral kingship', a problem that has engendered heated debate for decades. This 'cult of kingship' and its historiography with reference to Sweden is discussed at greater length in chapter 11.

Recent historical writing has tended to suggest that government and politics in England, France and Germany were largely conducted through personal relations at least until the late twelfth century, and may not have been so very different from Scandinavian conditions after the Viking Age. In Scandinavia the greatest period of growth in royal bureaucracy occurred in the thirteenth century. Similarly, although an ideology of Christian kingship began to develop in Carolingian Europe and was taken a stage further by Germany's Ottonian kings (also emperors), it is arguable that Scandinavia caught up very fast, although it was Christianised later. Despite its title, the aim of this book is not so much to answer the question of whether Sweden was or was not a state in 1130 or 1300—a question which, as noted above, is always going to be contentious when there is no single definition of the state—but to investigate the dynamics of sociopolitical interaction and the way in which distinct regions and identities became subsumed in the Kingdom of Sweden. What type of legal and administrative structures might have been in place in 1130, how did they change during the following 150 years, and why? If the realm was defined by its king, what were the limits to his power and how was he perceived by other folk? Who made up the rival factions that engaged in successive armed struggles and what strategies did they employ?

CHAPTER TWO

SWEDEN BEFORE 1130

In order to consider the history of Sweden between the mid-twelfth and the end of the thirteenth century it is necessary first to look at the period before this. Until relatively recently views of administrative and military developments in the thirteenth century and earlier were viewed largely from the perspective of written sources. Unfortunately there are very few of them. Some political events were recorded in contemporary foreign sources, often suspect. The extant manuscripts of the *landskapslagar* date from the period after 1280. Although sometimes confused and apparently contradictory, they give a picture of administration and taxation at the time when they were written down (itself often a matter for dispute), and identifying the time at which given institutions were established is extremely difficult. The advent of rule by the Folkung dynasty has been seen as a turning point for several reasons. The date, 1250, is a convenient starting point for many historians, but it is also marked in monastic annals, since the number of entries relating to the internal affairs of Sweden before this date is very limited: despite the establishment of many monastic foundations in the mid- to late twelfth century, records before this concern largely the affairs of their own Orders or of Denmark. The number of surviving diplomatic sources also increases markedly in the early Folkung period.

Although few would argue with the statement that Sweden already existed as a single kingdom before the mid-twelfth century, the extent to which its different regions were integrated is much less easy to determine. Within the last half-century, however, other disciplines have made an increasing contribution to the discussion of Sweden's origin, particularly archaeology and the study of place-names and rune-stones. The early history of Sweden before 1130 is very obscure, details of names and events existing only in scattered foreign sources, but written evidence for the period 1130–1250 is also limited. This has left the field open for more or less informed speculation on the nature and degree of central administration and integration that existed prior to the accession of Sverker the Elder in c. 1132.

2.1. *Peoples, Regions and Regional Identity*

For most of the Middle Ages Skåne, Halland and Blekinge were parts of the kingdom of Denmark and Bohuslän belonged to the Norwegian crown. Before the twelfth century Sweden was recognised as being divided into two regions, Götaland and Svealand. The island of Gotland, although technically subject to the king of these two regions, was semi-independent.[1] These were the heavily-settled regions of the Iron Age and Viking Period. Götaland itself was divided by Lake Vättern into western and eastern regions (Västergötland and Östergötland), sometimes distinguished in pre-twelfth-century written sources. In *Heimskringla*, most importantly *Ynglingasaga* and *Saga Óláfs konungs ens helga*, Snorri Sturluson uses *Svíþjóð* to refer to the region around Mälar, *Svíaveldi* to refer to the kingdom of Sweden, in which he includes Fjädrundaland, Tiundaland, Attundaland (the three *folkland* of the later Uppland), Västmanland, Södermanland, Västergötland, Östergötland and Värmland, as well as 'marklands'.[2] Svíþjóð itself includes Södermanland, Västmanland, Fjädrundaland, Tiundaland, Attundaland and 'Sialand'.[3] The last named exists in no other source, but is probably Roden, the coastal region north of the Mälar waterway that bordered Attundaland and Tiundaland.[4] By and large other Icelandic writings agree with Snorri.[5]

Although the antiquity of their sources is often disputed, the Svealand regions listed above correspond largely to those in the Florence document of c. 1120, which are listed in a corrupt Latin

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[1] According to the thirteenth-century *Guta saga*, there was a voluntary agreement by Gotland to pay tribute and contribute to the Swedish *ledung* fleet. Earlier sources, such as the tale of Wulfstan in King Alfred's version of Orosius and the runestone of Torsätra are not necessarily evidence of conquest. From at least as early as the reign of Calixtus II (Pope 1119–1124) the Church did nevertheless recognise *Guthlandia* as an ecclesiastical province linked to Sweden. See Yrwing 1940 p. 47.

[2] SSH 1, *Ynglinga saga* 36, pp. 37–39 and *Ólafs saga helga* 77, pp. 326–27. The marklands are included in the diocese of Skara, alongside Värmland and Västergötland, so Snorri probably refers to Dal and Nordmark. There are minor differences between Snorri's description of the kingdoms in *Ynglingasaga* and the dioceses of *Ólafs saga*. All subsequent references to *Heimskringla* refer to the above edition.

[3] Named as Tiundaland, Sudurmannaland, Vesturmannaland, Fiadrundaland, Atiandaland, Sialand. This is the region referred to as 'Svealand' in this book, although Old Swedish sources usually used *Suecia/Suethia*, derived from the oldest known Old Swedish form *Sveþiuþ*.

[4] The north part, east of Tiundaland, constituted Tiundaland's Rod, and the southern part Attundland's Rod.

[5] Such as, for instance, Arngrímur Jónsson's *Sveciæ chorographia*.

form under *Nomina insularum de regno Suevorum: Guasmannia* (Västmanland), *Fedundria* (Fjädrundaland), *Tindia* (Tiundaland), *Atanht* (Attundaland), *Sundermannia* (Södermanland) and *Nerh* (Närke).[6] However, Adam of Bremen wrote that the territory of the *götar* extended as far as Birka, which implies that Södermanland was a part of Götaland.[7] Adam made obvious use of hearsay, as for instance in his designation of parts north of Svealand as a 'land of women', and may not have been particularly well informed about the inland areas of Sweden. One possible origin for a tradition that Götaland extended as far as Mälaren is that kings in Östergötland controlled the water route along the east coast of Södermanland and as far as Birka at various times in the Viking Age, perhaps with the backing of Danish overkings.[8] Adam would have travelled this route to reach Birka and both Danes and north Germans might well have referred to the whole region south of Mälaren as 'Gothia'. It is even possible that the 1285 testament of King Magnus Ladulås, which excludes the diocese of Strängnäs (in other words, Södermanland) from *Swecia*, reflects such a tradition, but the explanation for this is more likely to lie in the political circumstances of the time.[9] Other more sparsely settled regions were also sometimes included in Götaland, such as Värmland and Småland, because they adopted the law-codes of the neighbouring provinces (Sw. *land*, later *landskap*) and were settled from those areas. Correspondingly, peripheral regions such as Dalarna and Gästrikland were often also included in Svealand.

An examination of research into the origins of Sweden reveals that scholars have shown most interest in Svealand, and the greatest amount of archaeological research has also been carried out in

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[6] DS 51. Unless stated otherwise, this region, Snorri's *Svíþjóð*, is referred to throughout this work as Svealand and its people as *svear*. This therefore includes Södermanland and Närke, although Old Swedish *Suecia/Suethia* (derived from *Sveþiuþ*, the oldest OS form) was often used in twelfth- and thirteenth-century sources to refer only to the region north of the Mälar waterway and *svear*, *sveær* or *swænsk* to the people who lived there.

[7] ABG 4:13, p. 241, . . . *deinde Sconia prominent regio danorum, et supra eam tenso limite Gothi habitant usque ad Bircam. Postea longis terrarum spatiis regnant Sueones usque ad terram feminarum*, and 4:23, p. 254, *Deinde Ostrogothia protenditur iuxta mare illud, quod Balticum vocant, usque ad Bircam*. The fourth book of Adam's history, *Descriptio Insularum Aquilonis*, is listed as '4' in these footnotes.

[8] Kaliff 1999 p. 126.

[9] DS 802: *Pro istorum omnium solutione . . . In dyocesi strengenensi. monetam Nycopie et øræbro. In swecia vero finlandia monetam in vpsalia et arosia deputamus.*

this region, particularly Uppland. In part this is a product of necessity, as more rescue archaeology has been carried out in the Stockholm region than elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is not only for this reason that it is perceived, particularly by archaeologists, that Svealand was the centre, perhaps creator, of the medieval Swedish state, as reflected in the name Sverige (*svea-rike*), and therefore that Svealand was the most important region of the late Iron Age and early medieval period. In the first place, it is mentioned more in written sources than Götaland. The first probable mention is by Tacitus, who mentions *suiones*. Similar forms of this name are then used by Jordanes and Adam of Bremen, all mentioning them as a seafaring people who traded in furs, the latter listing a number of other items.[10] But one of the main reasons for the fame of the region, and Uppland in particular, was that Uppsala was located there. Our knowledge of religious and political activity in the pagan period is sketchy, but the two were probably not distinguishable to contemporaries. Gamla Uppsala was certainly a centre before the Christian period, which functioned as both cult place (which implied political importance) and market. While the *svear* are rarely mentioned, the *götar* of Götaland disappear from written sources altogether between c. 500 and 900 AD.[11] In c. 500 Procopius mentions them as neighbours to the Heruls, about whom he was actually writing, and they reappear 400 years later in Norwegian skaldic verse. Rimbert's *Vita Anskari*, the tale of Ansgar's mission to Sweden, mentions *svear* and *götar* as different peoples several times, but papal bulls mention only *sueones* before the end of the eleventh century. It is probable that the *götar* were included by them in Sueonia, since both Götaland and Svealand were apparently included in the see of Hamburg-Bremen. By contrast Gregory VII mentions 'reges wisigothorum' in a letter of 1081, and Hadrian IV 'regnum gothorum' some time in the 1150s.[12]

Within Svealand itself Uppland has received most scholarly attention. Uppsala's continuing importance as a religious centre after Christianisation, brought about by its selection as the seat of the

[10] The sea level in the ninth century was approximately five metres higher than it is today, and was navigable further inland.

[11] Unless *Beowulf* is accepted as a historical source for Sweden, and *geats* are accepted as *götar*, both highly dubious assumptions.

[12] Before becoming pope Hadrian had visited Sverker, father of the king to whom this letter is addressed, Karl Sverkersson, in 1154, under his own name, Nicholas Breakspear.

Swedish archbishop in 1164, is one factor that has continued to concentrate the attention of historians and archaeologists on the region. Another is the insistence of the *landskapslagar* that this was where kings were selected, whereas other regions could only ratify or reject this decision. However, it is impossible to determine how old this tradition was. Referring to the unlawful election of Magnus Nielsen as king by the *götar*, Saxo, writing at the end of the twelfth century, says that the *sueones* retained this ancient right.[13] Uppland itself comprised three *folkland*, Tiundaland, Attundaland and Fjädrundaland. The origins of this division are difficult to trace, but most archaeologists think they developed after 1100.[14] The term Uppland first appears in the law text *Upplandslagan* (1296), whereas its three constituent *folkland* are attested early in the previous century.

Within Svealand, Södermanland and Västmanland have similar topography and external remains to Uppland,[15] whereas Götaland has a more varied topography. Settlement in Götaland, in both late Iron Age and early medieval periods, was concentrated in the fertile plains stretching across northern Västergötland and the centre of Östergötland from west to east. Västergötland was, however, less advantageous for trade than Östergötland (and the Mälar region) as it had only one point of access to the sea, the mouth of the Göta River. Svealand has a very large number of remains registered with *Riksantikvarieämbetet* from every prehistoric period, although Gotland and parts of Östergötland are comparable. The earlier arrival of Christianity in Gotland and Götaland than in Svealand resulted in the earlier removal of much datable evidence in the form of gravegoods from cemeteries, but this does not conceal the fact that there are more cemeteries in Svealand, considered a vital indicator of Iron Age and Viking Period settlement. However, there is always a question as to the relative importance of different criteria when considering the question of state formation. Before the Iron Age, although the number of remains and cemeteries is lower in Västergötland than

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[13] Saxo 13.5, pp. 118–119:
Interea Sueticarum partium rege absumpto/Gothi summa:cuius omne penes Sueones arbitrium erat/Magno deferre ausi alieni privilegii detrimento dignitatis sibi incrementa querebat. Quorum Sueones auctoritate contempta, vetere gentis suae prerogitaviae in aliquanto obscurioris populi invidia deponere passi non sunt.

[14] For instance, see Hyenstrand 1974. The question is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4.

[15] The work of Wijkander on Södermanland (1983), is, however, an exception.

in Uppland, the number of grave cairns with a diameter of ten metres or more, likely to be indicators of powerful families or central places, is greater.[16] The difference between the regions is more marked in the Iron Age, particularly the later (post-Roman) Iron Age, the earliest period proposed (but not by recent scholars) for the beginning of Swedish state formation. In no region is there any obvious connection between Roman Iron Age cemeteries and later settlement, but in Svealand and Östergötland from c. 500 AD there is a marked expansion of settlement, with a clear continuity between cemeteries and place-names identified as belonging to the later Iron Age and *gårdar* and *byar* which can be linked to medieval settlement.

In late Iron Age Svealand cemeteries were both bigger and greater in number than those in Västergötland and most of Östergötland. According to Ambrosiani, some of these cemeteries ought to be linked to Roman Iron Age settlement, but remains from this period are rarely found in them.[17] The cemeteries contain a great variety of grave types, mounds of considerable size and turfed-over rectangular and ship-shaped stone settings. Such cemeteries exist in Östergötland, but in Västergötland they are small and often totally lacking from many *byar* where finds indicate that they were used in the later Iron Age. The Götaland *byar* are often large by comparison with those in Svealand, both nowadays and in the *jordeböcker* (land registers) of the sixteenth century, 3–4 or 10–12 households as opposed to 1–2 in the Mälar valley. In each Västergötland *socken* there are one or two large villages, but in the Mälar valley twelve to twenty-four smaller ones. There are therefore considerably more primary units in Svealand, but also more graves per primary unit (as identified by Swedish archaeologists).[18]

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[16] Selinge 1985 pp. 47–51. In Scandinavia archaeological periods are divided as follows: Bronze Age 1800–500 BC, Pre-Roman Iron Age 500 BC–0, Roman Iron Age 1–400 AD, Migration Period 400–550 AD, Merovingian or (in Sweden) Vendel Period 550–800 AD, Viking Age 800–1050 AD. In Denmark the period 400–800 AD is referred to as the Germanic Iron Age.

[17] See Ambrosiani 1964 p. 123, figure 44. An example is the cemetery of Vaxtuna in Orkesta, pp. 124–27.

[18] The number of graves per unit (*enhet*) in Laske in Vastergötland is 14.5 as opposed to 92.5 in Serninghundra in Attundaland, while the number of late Iron Age primary units is 15 as opposed to 95 and the number of medieval primary units (*primärenheter*) 15 as opposed to 55. See Selinge 1985 pp. 56 and 58 and table on p. 57. The measurements are based on known historical units up to 1540 and archaeological and place-name evidence.

The correspondence between Iron Age units and medieval units in Svealand indicates that colonisation was almost 'complete' in the Mälar region by the Viking Period, whereas this appears not to be the case in Västergötland. The traditional view is that later Iron Age *gårdar* developed into villages in the Viking Period, but it is possible that these units were already villages in the Vendel Period.[19] However, there is a problem if the same logic is followed for the evidence available in Västergötland. If the number of graves reflects the number of inhabitants, there would not have been sufficient habitation for the identified *gårdar* to have been occupied continuously during the Iron Age and Viking Periods. Many *gårdar* may have been later in origin,[20] but the size of the villages would still not reflect their population as indicated by grave numbers. While some *byar* such as Högstena in Falan have large cemeteries, many lack cemeteries altogether, one such example being the probable place of Birger Jarl's death, Long (Storby) in Varaslätten.[21] This was owned by the crown in the Middle Ages, and was centre of an administrative district ('Longs bo') and seat of the *lagman*. Part of it is almost certainly Iron Age. It appears that many cemeteries in Västergötland have been farmed out after the arrival of Christianity, probably because they were placed in fertile areas. Nowadays the land between the plateau and the hills is suitable mostly for agriculture, but earlier technology may well have favoured the lighter soils of slopes and plateaus, where remaining graves are often found. Cemeteries in Svealand were generally sited on uncultivatable land.

The majority of modern archaeologists trace the beginning of state formation in Sweden to the post-Roman Iron Age, by which they mean the era when powerful chieftaincies that later became kingdoms and ultimately the state of Sweden began to develop. Ingegerd Särlvik, for instance, on the basis of a detailed study of south-western Sweden with reference to the anthrolopogical classifications mentioned

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[19] As in other cases, I have retained the Swedish word *gård* (pl. *gårdar*) rather than translating it as 'farmstead', 'manor' (often, in Swedish, *huvudgård*) or 'estate', which are not interchangeable in English, implying a difference in social status which is not necessarily implicit in the Swedish word. A recent exposition of the first view is expressed in Larsson 1997.

[20] This appears to be the case, for instance, with Alvasjön, which contains no pre-medieval finds. See Selinge 1985 p. 66.

[21] Ek p. 44: *Birger jerl doo i Jalbolung*. The author tells us that the place was near Varnhem, where Birger's body was taken.

earlier, has argued that a chieftain society developed in north-central Västergötland, northern Bohuslän and Halland during the Migration Period.[22] In Östergötland there appears to have been a large scale abandonment of Roman Iron Age settlement sites in the Migration Period, with the subsequent growth of chieftaincies.[23] The Mälar region has been well served by archaeologists such as Björn Ambrosiani and Åke Hyenstrand, who have traced a similar discontinuity between Roman and Migration Periods. The extent to which chieftains of the Iron Age controlled settlements is unclear, but it has been argued, with regard to Romerike in Norway, that landowners were increasingly able to manage villages or groups of them, their power and the rights inherited from former landlords being reflected in single-burial monuments, particularly mounds.[24] Nevertheless, despite a certain level of continuity, there were marked changes in village structure in Scandinavia during the Viking Period, especially in Götaland and parts of Denmark.

Selinge suggests that many Viking Age Västergötland villages may have differed from those in Svealand and western Östergötland in that their households were 'mobile'.[25] Villages were periodically moved to nearby sites in Fyn and Jylland, a possible indicator of the landowners' authority. Unfortunately this makes such villages difficult to date back beyond the historical period. As in Västergötland, many villages in Skåne are also difficult to date earlier than the Viking Period. Cemeteries may therefore remain undiscovered, because they are near to village sites, but not next to them. If this scenario is correct, land use was mobile, but settlement and cemetery construction restricted to a given area. In the Mälar region there appears to have been more fixed and regulated settlement, where land use was restricted, and cemeteries and houses were on designated or agreed sites. Such a society leaves clearer continuity of archaeological evidence, which can therefore be traced back from the historical period through the use of archaeology. However, there is still insufficient evidence to assume that all cemeteries were occupied continuously throughout the Iron Age and Viking Periods, as many remain unexcavated. In a number of cases, when excavated, cemeteries have

[22] Särlvik 1982.
[23] See Kaliff 1999, and Kaliff and Carlsson 2003.
[24] Skre 1998.
[25] Selinge 1985 p. 70.

proved to be different in size and character from the estimates made before excavation.[26] Furthermore, even in the Mälar valley there was variation in settlement type. In Fjädrundaland, especially the region around Enköping, cemeteries are smaller, possibly a result of the more limited amount of land available for cultivation and settlement. According to researches and cultural and geographical phenomena, this is precisely the area where most regulated *tomter* are found.[27]

Despite the lack of archaeological data from many of its areas, there was also indisputably a change in village structure in Östergötland during the Viking Age, although it is uncertain whether the medieval pattern, which was more regulated than that of the Iron Age, developed before the eleventh century. As in Västergötland, there is evidence for bigger village units. The origins of the powerful magnate families of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as the *Stenkil ätten, Sverkerska ätten* and perhaps *Folkungaätten*, can probably be identified in large farms that began to develop in the Vendel Period. One such at Borg has been extensively excavated.[28] It was centred around a large cult building, which was removed in the late eleventh century, almost certainly due to the arrival of Christianity; but the estate remained, its owners presumably continuing to play an important role at the centre of the religious and social life of the community, founding churches and then monasteries instead of cult houses. Centres such as Vreta, Bjälbo and Kaga, which later belonged to the *Stenkil ätten*, *Folkungaätten* and *Sverkerska ätten* respectively, probably developed in a similar way. The concentration of these estates was in the west of Östergötland, where the centrally located large settlements of Linköping, Skänninge and Norrköping emerged as early centres of Christianity, each having two churches by the twelfth century.[29] However, they did not emerge as towns until the late

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[26] For instance, the discussion of Botkyrka in Ambrosiani 1964 pp. 165–68.

[27] Contrast with both types is represented by stationary settlement and land use which is entirely unregulated, as in Norway and Norrland in the Iron Age, and Vastergötland in the early Iron Age, or entirely unregulated mobile settlement and agriculture (for instance, burn-beat), characteristic of Bronze Age Scandinavia. See Selinge 1985 p. 75.

[28] See A.-L. Nielsen 1996. The work is summarised in Ersgård 2002 pp. 16–23.

[29] Lindgren-Hertz 1997. This is also summarised in Ersgård 2002. It is worth noting that several other settlements such as Motala did not develop into towns with privileges in the later medieval era, but had a similar character to the three western Östergötland centres that did in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, whereas Söderköping, in the east of the *landskap*, seems to have been a large urban centre in the twelfth century, albeit of different character from the later medieval town.[30]

One region that was not listed by Snorri as part of *Svíaveldi* was Småland, the area bounded by Östergötland in the north, Västergötland in the west and Blekinge in the south. Although not researched as well as Götaland and Svealand, considerably more is known of its prehistory than that of Värmland. In the Iron Age and Viking Age a number of settled districts, each of which consisted of several individual farms and small villages, were separated by wide belts of forest and marshland. Each district probably comprised a minor chieftaincy or 'kingdom', hence the name *småland* ('small lands').[31] Although a 'no man's land' prior to the early Middle Ages, insofar as it was not listed in any source as part of either the Danish or the Swedish kingdom, Småland's cemeteries and other remains bear all the hallmarks of an aristocratic warrior society similar to that of Götaland and Svealand, albeit perhaps on a smaller scale. The majority of burials are cremations and the majority of identifiable grave finds weapons. Grave finds are concentrated in certain localities, some of which also have large mounds, such as the Håringe/Skeda complex in Njudung. In the same localities runestones were erected in the eleventh century, and later Romanesque churches.[32] In contrast to those of Finnveden, Njudung and Möre, the Iron and Viking Age graves of Värend showed greater similarities to those of Blekinge and Skåne than to those of Götaland or Svealand.[33] As elsewhere in the later kingdom of Sweden, the number of graves shows that settlement expanded during the later Iron Age, Viking period and the High Middle Ages.

The problems outlined above, related to the different cultural landscapes, account for many of the discrepancies between the regions. Västergötland may have had a continual and even fixed development of settlement in the Iron Age, which is not marked by continuation in evidence of land-use or cemeteries. Villages in Götaland

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[30] See Broberg and Hasselmo 1978 pp. 4–6.
[31] Hansson 2001 pp. 58–62.
[32] For instance, as at Broby, in Lannaskede *socken*, Njudung, and Östra Torsås in Värend; see Hansson 2001 pp. 133 and 143.
[33] Hansson 2001 p. 61.

were fewer but bigger than those of Svealand. Nevertheless, the population of Svealand, which also had a larger settlement area, was certainly greater in the Late Iron Age and Viking Period than in Götaland. As the more fully colonised region, it has been argued, particularly by archaeologists, it presented greater possibilities for state-building. Paradoxically, greater regulation and fixed development, together with the smaller size of settlement units, may have hindered the rise of very powerful families able to dominate large areas.

2.2. *Kings and aristocracy*

The Old Swedish name for king, *konunger* (or *kununger*) derives from the stem *konr*, '(noble or distinguished) man' (from Proto-Germanic *kunja*, related to kin and descent) and the patronymic suffix *-ung-*. The title implies that a ruler had to be a 'son of a distinguished man', or at least descended from one, to have any legitimacy.[34] In medieval written sources referring to the Viking Period the most important rulers after kings are called *jarl*, and the term also occurs on two Swedish rune-stones from Svealand, Sm 76 (Södermanland) and U 617 Uppland.[35] In addition to these, other names that appear in place-names or on rune-stones were probably their warrior followers, some of whom may have had authority over limited numbers of men, such as *þæghn, dræng, rink* and *karl*. The terms *styreman, sty(-)rimaðr* or *styre* refer to ship's helmsmen (effectively captains).[36]

Precisely what was expected of a Swedish Iron Age or Viking ruler is uncertain, since reliable sources are so limited. The title *konunger* itself implies that ancestry was important, and the inscriptions on several rune-stones also show an interest in it. These include the Rök stone, Östergötland, the Malsta stone in Rogsta socken, Hälsingland (Hs 14) and the Sandsjö stone of Småland (Sm 71).[37] In producing genealogies that purport to go back to the pagan period medieval Icelandic and Danish writers were clearly influenced by a

[34] Hellquist 1957 pp. 496–98, and Peterson 1994 p. 28.
[35] Peterson 1996 p. 26.
[36] See Hellberg 1978 pp. 67–77, and Brink 1997 p. 4.
[37] Sm 71 and Hs 14. See Peterson 1994 pp. 224–26, and S.B.F. Jansson 1987 pp. 100–01.

classical tradition that went back to Livy and Virgil, who placed gods at the head of their lists. The tradition was possibly transmitted to Scandinavia via works such as Jordanes's *Getica* (whose genealogy derives from the lost works of Cassiodorus) and Gregory of Tours's *Historiae Franconum*, histories of the Goths and the Franks respectively, in which these gods were interpreted as humans.[38] Nevertheless, it is possible that there were Scandinavian traditions independent of this, such as that preserved in *Háleygjatal* (c. 980), concerning the Viking Age jarls of Lade, Norway, who were allegedly descended from Odin and the giantess Skadi.[39] The age of the poem *Ynglingatal*, which tells of the descent of rulers of the *svear* from Yngvi, Ing- or possibly Freyr, is altogether more problematical, since it exists only as an incorporation in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, written in the thirteenth century.[40] The evidence that boys were buried in Vendel XII and the eastern mound of Uppsala also suggests that by the Vendel Period people of a ruling elite had an inherent nobility by virtue of descent, rather than simply by any deeds they may have done.

Sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that purport to relate events from the Iron Age, notably the first nine books of Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* and Snorri Sturlusson's *Ynglingasaga*, can now be disregarded as evidence for historical events. Although it is probable that some grains of truth remain in them, they are lost among the myths and inventions, some of which bear a distinct resemblance to events of the authors' own period. The same applies to *Beowulf*. All these are notable as works of literature; they provide evidence of how those who listened to them or read them wished to see their

[38] Getica was written in 551 and Gregory lived from c. 539–94. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* originated the practice of euhemerism.

[39] The poem was written by Eyvind Finnsson, and various stanzas are preserved in *Fagrskinna*, Snorri's *Edda* and *Heimskringla*. See Skj. B1, pp. 60–62. Gro Steinsland has also argued that the marriage of Odin and Skadi is a *hieros gamos*, a symbolic union of earthly ruler and the wild region he must control that produces the prototypical king. The *hieros gamos* of the Near East, however, from which the majority of examples derive, is a prototypical marriage between man and goddess. See Steinsland 1991.

[40] A discussion of the problems surrounding this poem is beyond the scope of this study: suffice it to say that most scholars think it derives from ninth-century Norway, but some think it much more recent. For the latter view see Krag 1991 pp. 54–55, 87–97, 182–83, and for recent support of the more traditional view, Sundqvist 2002 pp. 161–66.

past, rather than of the period they claim to portray. Rimbert's *Vita Anskari* gives details of kings of the ninth century, when Ansgar carried out his missionary work, and some of the same kings appear in the extant king lists. The most detailed, that of *Västgötalagen*, is dated by Lindquist to the mid-thirteenth century. Rimbert's text was no doubt used in the compilation of these lists, as was Adam's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae*.[41] Alongside the *Västgötalagen* king list are lists of bishops and *lagmän*. The earliest catalogue of Swedish kings appears at the end of the Icelandic *Hervararsagan*, according to Ellehøj probably compiled by Ari in early twelfth-century Iceland.[42] It is not a contiguous list, as it contains large gaps in the chronology. The earliest part is in the *Beowulf-Ynglingatal* mould, but it is a useful source for the period also covered by Adam of Bremen's *Gesta*, the late tenth and eleventh centuries, and contains some differences. Adam was preoccupied with Church matters and appears to have acquired some of his information on earlier kings from suspect second-hand sources. Much of his account of pagan practice may also be invention.[43] It is in these two texts that the term *sveakung* first occurs, a term which in itself may have misled historians and archaeologists into assuming that Svealand was the creator of the Swedish state.[44]

Another source which might appear to indicate that Götaland and Svealand were one kingdom in the eleventh century is the notitia 'Landamæri I', a much discussed record of a treaty supposedly made between Emund *slemae* and Sven Forkbeard, whose reign was thirty years earlier than Emund's.[45] In the past many scholars thought this was an error in copying or a false interpretation by later scribes,

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[41] P. Sawyer 1991a pp. 17–19.

[42] Hervarar saga pp. 67–71. See also Ellehøj 1965 pp. 85–108.

[43] ABG 4:26–28, pp. 259–61. The site of the temple of 'Ubsola' that he describes, if it existed, has never been identified: see, for instance, Bonnier 1991 pp. 82–92. Alkarp interprets the temple as a misunderstanding of mythological landscape: see Alkarp 1997 pp. 155–61. An extreme, but not wholly implausible, argument is that the whole Ubsola tale was an attack on Gregory VII's centralising policy, represented by his construction of the Lateran palace, possibly built on a biblical text: see H. Jansson 1998.

[44] I. Lindquist 1941 pp. 55–60. He believes that the king list and *lagman* list were composed at the same time.

[45] See VgL 1, p. XIII. There are five manuscripts of the treaty in Stockholm's Kungens Bibliotek, including one in each version of VgL, and one in *Codex Wormianus* (AM 28, Copenhagen). A version of the latter is included in P. Sawyer 1991a p. 72. Emund is probably the *Emund pessimus* of Adam: see ABG 3.15, p. 155.

and that the Sven in question must have been a different king, but Peter Sawyer pointed out that every single version has the identical mistake, and made a convincing case that the document was thirteenth-century and of Danish provenance.[46] In view of this, *Landamæri I* does not provide sound evidence for borders in the eleventh century, nor does its designation of Emund as 'kunung i Opsalum' tell us that Uppland was the centre of the Swedish kingdom at this date. Within Sweden itself power remained fragmented and kings, even dynasties, usually survived only for a short period. The territory that a given king controlled, even indirectly, tended to vary during his reign. Power seems to have been particularly fragmented in the Mälar valley, where the king's authority was even more limited than in Götaland. *Hervararsaga* suggests that there were two kings in northern Svealand at one time during the tenth century, one based in Uppsala, the other probably in Adelsö (Alsnö, Birka).[47] They were brothers; whether such a division was frequent or had any relationship to the later boundaries of the Uppland *folkland* is a matter for conjecture. Jarls mentioned in sources referring to the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, such as Stenkil (before he became king) and Karl Sunesson, were powerful nobles who dominated certain regions of the kingdom.[48] It is possible that early Swedish kings used tributary jarls to govern their disparate territories in the same way as Danish and Norwegian kings used the Lade jarls. The ninth and tenth centuries in Svealand appear to represent a transition period between chiefdom and state, without any established succession rules and with kings (who could possibly be designated 'overkings') ruling territories that fluctuated in size through sub-kings or tributary chiefs.

[46] Where it originated is not certain. Weibull concluded that it was Swedish, but this view has been questioned by Peter Sawyer, who concluded that the text was originally Danish, and that Swedish copies, all contained within later texts, may have been adjusted. See Weibull 1921 pp. 182–90, and P. Sawyer 1988a pp. 165–70, and 1991a pp. 64–71.

[47] Hervarar saga 15, p. 69. It names Önundr (Anund) as king in Uppsala and Björn as another king. They were brothers. In his *Life of Ansgar* Rimbert also mentions an Anund who tried to take Birka, possibly the same person: see RVA pp. 41–42.

[48] Stenkil is named as *fyrst jarl i Svíþjóð* in Hervarar saga 16, p. 70. See also Sawyer 1991a pp. 9–10.

2.3. *An Early Administration?*

The origin of many of the administrative districts mentioned in the law texts of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries has been the subject of much debate. Some of these, such as the *hundare*, have parallels in other parts of Scandinavia, Germany and England. As in the case of the origin of the law codes, the debate has thus been bedevilled with the underlying question of whether Scandinavia's administrative units were imported administrative tools or whether they originated in the 'Germanic homelands'. In attempting to uncover the origins of administration in Svealand many scholars have constructed hypothetical early administrative systems, frequently making the assumption that some form of central power lay behind them. These theories and the possible development of administration before 1130 are considered in more detail in Chapter 5, since the 'prehistory' of Swedish administration extends into the thirteenth century and many of the changes that have been hypothesised have been placed in widely varying eras from the Vendel Period to the reign of Knut Eriksson or even later. Theories of archaeologists such as Hyenstrand and Wijkander have suggested that there was already a nascent centrally organised administrative system in place before the Viking Age.[49]

A strong influence on Swedish work in this field was exercised by Randsborg's study of Denmark. He believed that Viking Age Denmark was a 'quasi-feudal' society, already divided into administrative districts for the raising of military forces through service. This society was relatively stable, but was then disrupted by the expansion of trade and increasingly frequent warfare. Thus external factors were of primary importance for him.[50] However, progressive state building may have been one of the causes of the Viking raids from Denmark and Norway, as the idea of single kingship, perhaps already existing as early as 800 AD, became reality in c. 900–1000. But no such evolution took place in Sweden in this period. This may have been due to a number of factors, among them topographic and social divisions and distance from the influence of mainland Europe, particularly that of the Carolingian empire, which was also a major

[49] For instance, the possible evidence of written sources such as *Beowulf*, the Ansgar legend, Wulfstan and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hamburgensis Ecclesiae.*

[50] Randsborg 1980 pp. 5, 168.

threat to Denmark. Nevertheless, in Sweden archaeology provides evidence of intensified trade, leading to possible increased specialisation in manufacture and new sources of wealth and power that may have disrupted the established order.

One of the place-name components that has been associated with administration on the basis of geographical position is *tuna*. The name exists in Uppland, Södermanland and eastern Västmanland. Thirty-five places including this name are in parishes with churches, while of those which lack churches a number have names associated with churches or priests' dwellings. There need not, of course, be any single explanation for the prevalence and position of these names.[51] Hellberg concluded on the basis of the settlement pattern that the sites were connected to the early development of a Svea-state with roots in the Late Roman Iron Age, but few other researchers accept such an early dating.[52] The number of Migration Period fortified sites suggests frequent struggles between local petty kings or rulers even after this period.[53] Hyenstrand places the *tuna* naming much later, and links them to hypothetical changes in administrative boundaries.[54] Although linguistic evidence gives no indication that *tuna* may have been a name for an administrative centre, Hyenstrand's detailed study of localities does indicate that *tuna*-sites were centrally located within settlement clusters. He also suggested that settlements named *berga* and *lundby* could have had administrative functions, but both names are clearly derived from location in the landscape (hill and wood), and there is no particular reason to assume that they were anything other than settlement sites, probably originating in the Viking Period. The evidence that *byar* named *husaby* were linked to administration is much clearer, particularly as these names recur so

[51] It is by no means certain that *tuna*-names indicate places of central importance, and if they did, whether such places were cult, trading or administrative centres, or had multiple functions. See, for instance, T. Andersson 1991 pp. 197–204.

[52] Hellberg 1979 pp. 123–26. John Kraft also argues for a 'well-organised' *Svearike* in the Iron Age. He suggests that *tuna*-sites were cult centres for chiefdoms, and later also centres for coastal defence. It is likely that *tuna*-sites, if connected to 'administration' at all, had multiple functions, particularly as any clear distinction between religious and secular is unlikely in pagan Iron Age society. Even if Kraft is right, consistency in nomenclature does not necessarily imply centrally-inspired organisation. See Kraft 2001.

[53] See, for instance, Olausson 1996 pp. 157–58.

[54] Hyenstrand 1974 pp. 10–18. Hyenstrand suggested that the establishment of places named *tuna* might be related to his reconstructed *storhundare* and *normal-hundare*, especially as *tuna*-names show a strong relationship to his double *socknar*.

often in the *landskapslagar* in connection with crown-owned land, frequently matters concerning division of fines, *gästning* and the raising of the *ledung*. *Husabyar* stand out as distinct from other *gårdar*, but there is good reason to believe that they belong to the early Middle Ages, even if their sites were settled earlier, and they undoubtedly had an important function during the reigns of the *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten* kings.

The models of archaeologists such as Wijkander and Hyenstrand have been criticised because they assume a greater degree of central control and administration than was possible in the period before the thirteenth century, while written evidence for their reconstructed territorial divisions is wholly lacking.[55] Of the monuments only rune-stones provide any written evidence. They are a relatively late phenomenon in Scandinavia, the vast majority of stones belonging to the period between the mid-tenth and the early twelfth centuries.[56] Almost all are memorial stones, stating the relationship between the person or persons who raised the stone and the person commemorated.[57] As such they present a claim to inheritance of ownership rights and power. Birgit Sawyer has argued that they are also a symptom of crisis in a period of religious and political change. Her argument is reinforced by the location of Scandinavian rune-stones, which are rare in regions where royal power was established early, but concentrated in regions where local nobility needed to proclaim their position and their allegiance to the new faith, Christianity.[58] The fashion seems to have spread from Denmark to Norway and Västergötland by the late tenth century, where the influence of the Christian Danish kingdom created by Harald Bluetooth was strong. In all these lands the regions where royal power was strongest have the lowest concentration of stones; Fyn and southern Jylland in Denmark, Vestfold in Norway and the region around Kinnekulle in Västergötland. The region around Kinnekulle contained a *husaby* site,

[55] For instance, Rahmqvist 1996 p. 51.

[56] B. Sawyer 2000 pp. 28–35.

[57] B. Sawyer 1988 and 2000 pp. 47–83, 90–91. Sawyer interprets the difference between generations of relatives mentioned, at first sight a difference between west and east Scandinavian stones (Denmark, Norway, Väistergötland, as opposed to Östergötland and especially Svealand), as a difference between the system of inheritance used by upper nobility and lower nobility, the latter not being represented on west Scandinavian rune-stones.

[58] Gräslund 1994, B. Sawyer 2000 pp. 7–15, 125–45.

also the site of an imperial-style church and the first Swedish episcopate.[59] The raising of rune-stones elsewhere in Västergötland may be interpreted either as imitation of the Danish kings, who owned a considerable amount of land there, or as a declaration by local landowners wishing to establish their rights.

The same may be said of the raising of rune-stones in eastern Sweden, where the fashion began in the early eleventh century and lasted longer.[60] As previously noted, power in Uppland was more fragmented than elsewhere in Sweden and the influence of kings weak. Neither Erik nor his son Olof Skötkonung were able to extend their power much beyond the *kungsgård* of Sigtuna, and Olof retreated to Västergötland. It is possible that his father Erik's apostasy was necessary to restore some authority in Svealand after his conversion to Christianity had weakened it. However, the influence of the new faith spread; a long drawn out and apparently largely voluntary process. The rune-stones, which provide evidence of this, acted as documents proclaiming property rights for all to see. In Uppland they were often sponsored by several people, all assenting to the fate of the property of the deceased, which was sometimes bequeathed to the Church. While acceptance of Christianity may reflect the influence of Christian kings such as Olof, it may also, as Sawyer has observed, be a statement of independence by other newly converted landowners, particularly when the stone also commemorates the establishment of a new *ting* or assembly place. Such is the case with the stones sponsored by Jarlabanke and by the sons of Ulf in Vallentuna.[61] The relatively low number of stones that mention men who died in the east or did not return suggest that such expeditions occurred on the initiative of local chieftains.[62] Other men wandered off to serve the kings of Denmark in their wars in England. Rune-stones provide

[59] A. Andersson 1968 pp. 116–18.

[60] B. Sawyer 2000 pp. 17–20.

[61] U 212 (Jarlabanke) and U 225 (sons of Ulf). See Zachrisson 1998 p. 154, B. Sawyer 2000 pp. 136–39. Zachrisson (1998 pp. 129–36) interprets the chronology of rune-stone types as showing two periods of conversion activity. See also Gräslund 1996 pp. 327–28.

[62] For instance, U 636 (Alve's memorial to Arnfast, his son who went east to Gårdarike, in Låddersta, Kalmar socken), U 687 (Runa's memorial to his and Helge's sons Spjallbude, Sven, Andvätt and Ragnar in Sjusta, Skoklosters socken), or Sö 148 (Tjudulf's and Boe's memorial to their father Farulv, who failed to return from Gårdarike). Of the second group the most well known is the memorial stone of Ulv, who took three gelds in England (Yttergärde). All the records on these

no evidence of early central organisation in Svealand. The runestone fashion is more evident and lasted longer in Uppland than in any other region of Scandinavia, and this is very likely connected with the prolonged battle to establish Christianity in this region, for which there is plenty of other evidence. Its decline is probably linked to the establishment of churches, where gravestones with runic inscriptions provide evidence of a transitory phase.

No-one disputes the underlying assumption that there was a general progression from a segmentary society towards a state society during the period 1–1300 AD. The methods of spatial analysis employed by Hyenstrand and Wijkander to identify primary centres are well established, but reliance on size of monuments alone can prove misleading.[63] Without the clues as to which centres were the major ones provided by the written records that are a hallmark of state societies, the Swedish archaeologist is thrown back on place-name analysis, since datable finds from excavated mounds have been rare. Both place-name evidence and the distribution of monuments (in this case primarily mounds) give an indication of many centres of power, distributed at roughly equal distances from each other in the Mälar landscape, and obviously corresponding to settlement clusters whose locations were originally determined primarily by topography. It is also likely that undiscovered cemeteries still exist, visible evidence of them either ploughed out or built over. There is also a difficulty in establishing precisely what physical manifestations of power or 'central places' represent. Political, sacral and economic centres need not be in the same place.[64] On the basis of their analyses, some modern archaeologists have argued that there was a 'coming together' of these locations after the Roman Iron Age, perhaps representing a stage when chiefs began to appropriate more sacral power; but the pattern was subsequently disrupted in the Viking Age when new wealth and external influence led to the creation of trading centres and sometimes towns, which became centres of political authority. Even before that, it cannot be certain what function monuments played. Centrally located mounds, for instance, may have begun their

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stones have a function as regards inheritance rights, the former group because of the disappearance or death of property owners or future inheritors, the latter because it provides evidence of inheritable wealth.

[63] For theories of societal analysis and use of modem technology in spatial analysis see, for instance, Binford 1983, or Hodder 1986.

[64] Kaliff 1999 p. 145.

existence as burial sites and markers of elite wealth and authority, but later changed in function to assembly places, in the case of Scandinavia possibly *ting* sites.

What is missing from any early source (archaeological, place-name or other) is a clear indication of any single long-term centre of power above the mound-based or *gård*-centred units. At Gamla Uppsala three exceptionally large mounds form part of a larger cemetery, and two have been dated to the sixth century. If they were 'royal', as they are often named, there is no other indication of such important burials around Uppsala before or after that period. The Vendel Period finds from the boat-grave mounds at Vendel and Välsgärde may be particularly rich, but they are located on the periphery of the settlement area of the period and there is no clear indication that those buried there were kings or any other clue that the sites may have been administrative centres. Although the most well-known, there are several other examples of boat-graves dating from the Vendel and Viking Periods, some of which are clearly not of kings or leading members of their retinues. The Viking Age boat-graves of Tuna in Badelunda, admittedly not in Uppland, contained women, while the small helmet and sword of Vendel XII were probably those of a boy. While indicating that those buried with weapons were not necessarily warriors, the latter may suggest a hereditary rulership, since a boy cannot have been an agent of a ruler, a frequent suggestion for the status of the occupants of the boat-graves. There is no consistency of location for the richest grave finds, and because of the variety of types of burial in the Iron Age and Viking Period and the possibility that many have been robbed out, it cannot be assumed that the original owners of the biggest mounds or the richest discoveries necessarily had greater wealth or prestige than their noble contemporaries or ruled over them.

It needs to be emphasised that while many such features as mounds undoubtedly do represent central places in Iron Age and Viking Period society, this does not imply that they marked administrative centres. It is more likely that they represent chieftains' seats or *gårdar* than any central authority.[65] Kings or chiefs in a segmentary society could wield considerable power and authority through their association with sacral powers and military success without the legal

[65] Kaliff 1999 p. 127.

and administrative apparatus of a state. In attempting to guess how the Iron Age kings in Sweden might have governed, a useful comparison may be made between Iron Age Sweden and pre-Viking Ireland or early Anglo-Saxon England, for which there is more evidence. There the king's warrior retinue functioned as tribute-gatherers from those under his protection, and the proceeds of trade and tribute were often redistributed to the same followers. As wealth and prosperity grew through trade and the creation of urban centres, in the case of Sweden perhaps *kungsgårdar*, their successors often provided the necessary patronage for the development of crafts and the founding of churches and monasteries.[66] Even the administration of the princes of Kievan Rus, in part probably derived from Sweden, functioned largely in the same way, the prince's *druzhina* providing its backbone.[67] Kings recognised as Overking in the British Isles were recognised as such because they could defeat their rivals in battle—they may have exacted tribute, but did not administer their rivals' lands.

2.4. *The creation of the kingdom*

Until relatively recently settlement pattern and size and location of *by* and *gård* were seen largely in the light of administration, but it is now recognised that other factors may be equally or more important in determining these. The paucity of sources for the period before the thirteenth century makes it impossible to ascertain the details of the functioning of the social system. It is however perfectly possible for separate regions to become integrated into a single polity that they all recognise by mutual agreement, without the central authority of an overall king or chief or any form of central administration. One model for this might be the Icelandic Commonwealth of the mid-thirteenth century AD. The island was divided into regions determined by geography, each having a regional ting at which free men met to resolve problems. An *allting* also existed for the whole island, its procedures governed by *lógsogurnar* (equivalent to the Swedish

[66] Viking Period trading centres did not necessarily fulfil the same functions as early medieval towns, however, and no direct continuity can be shown, for instance, between Uppåkra and Lund, or Birka and Sigtuna.

[67] Franklin and Shepard 1996 pp. 93–94, 286–291.

lagmän). *Ting* and *allting* were nevertheless dominated by the leading *goðar*, who owed their prestige to their personal ascendancy over the free men who worked their land and followed them. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw increased conflict between *goðar* (aggravated by the machinations of the Norwegian king Håkon IV), which resulted in a reduction in their number and the rise of territorial lordships (*riki*).[68]

The experience of Iceland tells us that territorial lordship need not be the result of regulation from above, and that confederacy can occur as a result of agreement between free men for mutual benefit. In developing models for the progressive political unification of the Scandinavian kingdoms during the Iron Age and Viking Age, archaeologists have frequently drawn analogies with the Merovingian and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The Frankish identity arose in the Netherlands and north-west Germany out of a confederation of smaller tribes, created in part in response to the Roman threat. Subsequently, after the Frankish expansion into northern Gaul, a state developed rapidly when Clovis first of all eliminated rival Frankish tribal kings, then conquered former Roman lands that had been overrun by Alamanni, Burgundians and Visigoths. In consolidating their new territory, the Merovingian kings had the great advantage of inheriting much of the former Roman administrative machinery. This clearly did not apply in Scandinavia, but the pattern of confederacy followed by rapid conquest and unification, in this case during the Viking Age, has been favoured as a model for the development of the Danish kingdom by both Randsborg and John Callmer.

The example of Anglo-Saxon England before the Viking invasions, which clearly speeded up the process of final English unification, provides a different and more gradual model, in which a large number of kingdoms developed, but their number was gradually reduced through conquest or intermarriage. Sources are poorer than those for the Merovingian kingdom, particularly for the period before c. 650, but the 'Tribal Hidage', which is thought to derive from the late seventh century, identifies a number of named areas. These probably corresponded to political entities, each of which contained a given number of hides, very likely corresponding to the area needed to maintain one family.[69] With the aid of later sources, especially

[68] Sigurðsson 1999b pp. 39–70.
[69] Yorke 1992 pp. 9–16.

the Domesday Book, a number of attempts have been made to identify these with given regions of seventh-century settlement, separated from each other by sparsely inhabited areas of forest, marsh or moorland. In Scandinavia hypothetical chieftaincies or kingdoms have been identified with Iron Age settlement regions in a similar fashion. In Norway highland regions that were uninhabitable in the Iron Age are still identifiable nowadays, but the extent of forests and marshes in early medieval England or Iron Age Sweden and Denmark is more difficult to ascertain. Despite this, the pattern of development in England may have been similar to that in Sweden. Both tribal confederacy and conquest could have occurred, although there the 'sudden conquest' scenario that finally created the Merovingian kingdom seems unlikely.[70]

If a period of conflict between petty kings and chieftains of the Mälar region indeed occurred in the Migration Period, it is unlikely to have been resolved without some sort of mutual agreement between the factions, for instance, the election of a 'high king'. The imposition of central authority through superior force could not bring lasting peace, being too dependent on the prestige and prowess of individuals and liable to collapse when the leader was removed or disappeared and was replaced by a less effective one. This seems to have been the situation in the Viking Age, as borne out by *Hervarar saga's* 'king list', even if its details may not be entirely reliable. What regions constituted 'kingdoms' in the later Iron Age is impossible to say. The evidence that Svealand was ever a single polity is very weak, since no named 'king of the svear' is recorded in any written source. Since it was recognised as a distinct region and its inhabitants had a name that distinguished them from their neighbours, there may have been a shared identity and it is not impossible that Iron Age kings from the Uppland region temporarily enforced their authority over the whole of Svealand. The names of the regions Västmanland and Södermanland (lands of the 'west men' and 'south

[70] Precisely these questions are handled by Näsman 1998 pp. 7–23. He favours the Merovingian model for the formation of the Danish kingdom, which is arguable, but some of his doubts about the validity of the Anglo-Saxon model are based on the idea that the whole of England was 'conquered territory' and that the English kingdoms arose out of 'chaos' (p. 14). Such views have been increasingly questioned and some of the kingdoms of the Tribal Hidage certainly originated as British polities. Some of these may have been linked to tribal identities that were not destroyed by Roman rule.

men') suggest that these territories were defined in terms of the later region of Uppland; but the name Uppland is not known from any source before 1296, and it was itself divided into three regions, Fjädrundaland, Attundaland and Tiundaland, by the early twelfth century at the latest. It is possible to envisage a progressive reduction in the number of kingdoms, as happened in early Anglo-Saxon England and early medieval Ireland, as kings enforced their overlordship over neighbouring kingdoms by force and absorbed them through marriage ties, often attempting to reduce tributary rulers and their close family to permanent inferior status through propaganda and manipulation of genealogies. However, such kingdoms are inherently unstable and prone to periodic disintegration, being dependent on the authority and prestige of individuals. Even after Svealand became recognised as an identifiable region there were probably periods with one king, more than one king, or even no king, as Adam of Bremen and *Herverarsaga* would seem to bear out. A system of cultic-judicial-administrative districts approximating to that proposed by Hyenstrand could nevertheless be created for mutual benefit.

In the Vendel Period an outlet for aggressive behaviour may have been found in the seaborne activities of the *svear*, directing the energies outside the Mälar region, and providing an outlet for surplus population, much as in the later Viking Period, or for that matter Iceland. Written evidence for *svea* expansion is virtually non-existent, but there are other pointers. Settlement extended beyond the boundaries of modern Sweden to the opposite shores of the Baltic, at Grobin in modern-day Latvia, Apuole in Lithuania and Elbing in Poland. These appear to have been settlements from Gotland, but weapon finds (dated to the seventh century) in burial mounds are of Svealand type. According to *Guta Saga*, Gotland, probably the hub of Iron Age trade in the Baltic, voluntarily submitted to the *svear* to provide protection for the activities of its traders, but it is more likely that the submission was made under duress.[71] The same period saw an influx of settlers into Finland, in the opinion of Meinander the only clear archaeological evidence of immigration from overseas

[71] Guta Saga [ed. Peel] 2, 14–21, p. 6. The finds in the eastern Baltic region correspond to finds in Svealand itself, where many burials in ground-level graves contained Gotlandish artefacts, suggesting some intermarriage: Burenhult 1991 pp. 58–59.

between the end of the Roman Iron Age and the Crusade Period (400–1150 AD).[72] Apparently Svealand rulers continued to enforce tribute on others in the eastern Baltic in the Viking Period, since Rimbert mentions that the Kurlanders (*Cori*) were paying it at the time of Ansgar's missions.[73]

Most dispute has centred around the degree of dominance which Svealand exerted within Sweden itself. On the basis of place-names many scholars have asserted that there was *svea* conquest or settlement in Sweden well to the south and west of Svealand. There are eight *husaby*-sites in Östergötland, the majority concentrated in the east, the area most easily reached by ships from Svealand, but only three in Västergötland, two of which may not be medieval foundations. In addition there appears to have been a spread of religious cults from Svealand into Götaland, which may have contributed to the supremacy of Uppsala. In his study of 1947 Elgqvist pointed to the spread of *Ull*-place-names, concentrated in Svealand, into other regions. They spread south-westwards into Västergötland, Värmland, Dal and Bohuslän, southward into Östergötland, Småland, Öland and Gotland, and also into areas that were sparsely inhabited before the Middle Ages, Gästrikland, Dalarna and Jämtland.[74] As in the case of the *husaby* names, many within Svealand are in the centre of Iron Age settlement regions, and some may have been *kungsgårdar* (for instance, Husaby-Ulleråker and Ulltuna). Many others are on islands or possible sites of trading places.[75] Elgqvist suggested that these may have displaced the *göt-* names, which have been explained as either a genitive of the people's name *götar* or a derivative of Odin's name *Gauti*.[76] Many *Ull-* sites are close to *göt*-sites or *husaby* sites. The latter may also be associated with names containing the element *kind*, meaning lineage or tribe, perhaps once distinguished from those in surrounding areas. In Västergötland there are two,

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[72] Meinander 1983 p. 246.

[73] RVA 30, pp. 60–61.

[74] Elgqvist 1947 p. 17. *Ull*-names occur in Svealand with various suffixes; Ullunda, Ulleräng, Ulleräker, Ullevi, Ulltuna, Ullanda, Ullene and Ullerö. Elgqvist suggests that *Ull* is the general name for a god. Most of the second parts derive from terrain, but *vi* means sacred place or offering place, and *-tuna* probably derives from *tun* ('enclosure', 'farmstead'). Ullvi, Ullavi or Ullevi are most common in the areas to which the name spread, suggesting a spread of a cult, but other Götaland variants are Ullevad, Ullnäs and Ullekalv (p. 19).

[75] Elgqvist 1947 pp. 60–62.

[76] Elgqvist 1947 pp. 64–65.

Husaby-Kåkinds in Forsby and Husaby in Kinnekulle. Seven *härad* names in Östergötland and three in Västergötland also contain this element. The other element of the place-name is often a man's name or natural feature.[77] As may be expected with place-names, there has been much disagreement as to when these appeared in Gotaland, and it is impossible to ascertain whether *Ull-* and *kind-* names originated in the same period. As noted above, there is good reason to place the establishment of *husabyar*, or at least the naming of settlements as such, in a much later period than either of these, in the early Middle Ages.

Up to the mid-twentieth century scholars tended to assume that any change of language, influx of names or even artefacts implied conquest. In part the belief in *svea* conquest was a consequence of accepting *Beowulf*, with its prediction of disaster for the Geats (assumed to be *götar*) as a historical source.[78] There is archaeological evidence of destruction in Götaland during the sixth century, and in Öland of depopulation as well.[79] It has been suggested that this was attributable to the plague that afflicted Europe in this period, which may not have affected Svealand, creating a situation in which the *svear* could expand. Svibo (Sveabodh) in Ventlinge *socken* on Öland seems to have been a site associated with the *svear*, suggesting that it was occupied before the *husaby* name appeared, and that there was probably no uniform administration in the Iron Age.[80] In the late twelfth century land here was lent to Birger Jarl Brosa, who probably had responsibility for the *ledung* fleet, and it may be that Svibo had retained its function as a base for fleets from earlier times.[81]

It is very likely, since there was no organised state in Svealand, or even a stable heterarchy, during the Migration and Vendel Periods, that *svear* activities took the same form as later Viking activities, a

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[77] For instance, Bjorkkind, Hammarkind, Hanekind. See Hellqvist 1916 p. 139, and Elgqvist 1947 pp. 79–82.

[78] All sorts of arguments have been put forward as to the identity of the Geats, as Götar, Jutes or Gotlanders, and the nature and identity of the landscape and monsters. As a work of tenth-century literature it is so far removed from history and has probably been subject to so many influences that it no longer (if it ever had) has any value as history.

[79] See Herschend 1988 pp. 60–65.

[80] DS 144, which names the place as donated to Riseberga nunnery by Erik Knutsson.

[81] DS 185, donation of Johan Sverkersson, dated 1220. For the jarl's function within the *ledung* organisation, see Chapter 7:2.

combination of trading, raiding, levying tribute and settlement. If this occurred in the later Iron Age it may have been the result of population pressure within the Mälar valley. It is highly improbable that areas giving tribute were administered in any effective way from the Mälar region. The *husaby*-sites of Götaland, even if they did exist as early as the Iron Age, show no signs of fortification; if force was used to exert control it can only have been through the threat of attacks by sea-borne forces from Svealand or coastal bases. It is worth noting that *husabyar* exist also in Norway and Jylland, Fyn and Lolland, but not Skåne, Halland or Blekinge.

With the possible exception of Charlemagne's campaigns, what is often referred to as 'conquest' in Iron Age and early medieval Europe did not involve systematic attempts to overrun territory, or to eliminate local nobility and administration (such as it was) and replace them, or to establish boundaries like those of today, or even like those of the later Middle Ages. More often it was piecemeal settlement or raiding, sometimes accompanied by localised displacement of population. Whatever conflict may have occurred earlier between *svear* and *götar*, even allowing for the paucity of written evidence, there is no evidence for it after the Viking Period. Even if there was immigration from Svealand to Götaland, whether the immigrant groups simply settled alongside the *götar* or became a ruling class or farmers, the populations had been fully assimilated by the twelfth century, speaking as they did mutually intelligible dialects or languages and unencumbered by religious beliefs which excluded those of their neighbours.[82] Thus any *svea* 'expansion' occurred long before the formation of a Swedish state, and most probably even before the Viking Period, that is, before the appearance of the first recorded king of both *svear* and *götar*, Olof Skötkonung.

Within the last two decades of the twentieth century supporters of a Götaland origin for the kingdom of Sweden have multiplied, while the old idea of domination by the *svear* has virtually died out. The 'Götaskolan' does not look to the Iron Age and Viking Age for the formation of the kingdom, but emphasises the Götaland origin

[82] Nowadays ethnic identity is frequently constructed on the basis of language, sometimes religion. Pagan 'religions' were generally syncretic, easily absorbing deities and rites from neighbouring areas. This was particularly so in an oral society, which did not have scribes to set down in words an official or unchallangeable order.

of the early medieval dynasties, *Sverkerska ätten*, *Erikska ätten* and (supposedly) *Folkungaätten*, and chooses to see the various rebel groups known as *folkungar* as rebellious *svear* obstructing the formation of the Swedish state, and being conquered. The identity of the rebels and the nature of early medieval conflicts will be discussed more fully elsewhere—suffice it to say that the *götar*-origin theory has more to do with modern-day rivalries between the regions (in particular, between Göteborg and Stockholm) than it does with medieval Sweden.[83] This is not to suggest that twelfth-century Sweden had any unified and consistent administration before the *folkungar*, or that family or personal alliances did not follow a regional pattern; but the power struggles of 1130–1252 cannot be seen as an ethnic conflict between *götar* and *svear*.

A number of medieval kingdoms can be seen as the result of a growth in cooperation between neighbouring regions, rather than conquest of one by another. While 'conquest' (in the form of enforcement of tributary status) might play a part, external threat often provided the main impetus for such alliances, frequently sealed by marriage unions. The formerly independent territorial lordships were then often faced with 'state creep' as the leading family adopted more and more of the trappings of kingship and began to build a following loyal to itself as a basis for a rudimentary administration. The kingdoms that rose on the ruins of the western Roman empire themselves owed their origins in the tribal confederations which arose as a response to the threat of Roman power.

2.5. *External overlordship*

Since it is suggested that there was no long-term unity even within the Mälar region, any Iron Age *svea* overlordship over neighbouring regions may have been exercised by individual chieftains rather than kings, and must have been unstable and short-lived, dependent as it was on military strength and their ability to bring it to bear. This is equally true of overlordship exercised by powerful jarls and kings in the Viking period, for which we have more certain evidence,

[83] A good example of the more acceptable face of this rivalry and the type of scholarship it engenders is provided by Lindblom 1985 pp. 127–52.

though not from Sweden. The Norwegian jarls of Lade from c. 960 (Håkon Gljotgardsson) to 1035 were overlords of other jarls throughout a large part of western Norway. After Olav Tryggvason's defeat at Svolder Erik Håkonsson became tributary to Sven Forkbeard (r 986–1014) and Knud 'the Great' (1018–1035).[84] In the same period Sven and Knud were overlords to the Swedish king Olof, whose status is reflected in his name 'Skötkonung'.[85] Sven married the former wife of Olof's father Erik after he died, which must have increased his authority. Neither Lade jarl nor Swedish king was supervised directly by the Danish king's agents, but they paid tribute and provided troops when these were called for. This particular period of overlordship did not survive Olof's death, and his son Anund made war (unsuccessfully) against Knud. Nevertheless Knud appears to have retained overlordship of parts of Sweden, notably Västergötland.[86]

During the same period the foundations had been laid for a more direct royal administration of the main regions of Denmark itself, Jylland, Fyn, Sjælland and Skåne. Sixteen places with the name *tegneby* indicate that landowners in Svealand and Götaland became servants of the Danish kings Sven Forkbeard or Knud.[87] *Tegneby* place-names are found in Västergötland, on the coast of Östergötland and around the Mälar lake system. The name derives from *thegn*, known to have been a holder of a military tenure in England during the same period.[88] A number of rune-stones indicate that Swedes went to England in the following (*lið*) of Danish kings during the wars of Æthelred's reign (978–1016).[89] Some are called *þegnar* or *drængar*, often *goda þegnar* or *goda drængar*; examples are scattered all

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[84] Krag 1995 pp. 92–93.

[85] The name 'skötkonung' does not appear in sources until the thirteenth century, but is certainly earlier, deriving from 'skatt-konung' (tribute-king): P. Sawyer 1991a p. 32.

[86] Sawyer 1991a pp. 53–54. Some of those recorded on Västergötland rune-stones as having served Knud appear to be identical to people recorded on stones in Denmark, suggesting that they owned land in both regions.

[87] They may also have been agents of Harald Bluetooth († 986), as suggested by Carl Löfving. However, while it may well have been Harald who finally united the regions that became medieval Denmark and built the trelleborg ring-forts, overlordship over Sweden seems less likely. If he did achieve this, it must have been interrupted by the victory of the Swedish king Erik Segersäll over Sven Forkbeard. See Löfving 2001a pp. 138–44.

[88] Abels 1988 pp. 117–19.

[89] On the nature of the *lið* and the armies of Sven and Knud in general, see Lund 1986.

over Sweden from the Mälar region southwards, including a 'dreng harda godan' in Finnveden, Småland (Sm48). These men may have held land, at least nominally, in the service of Knud or his predecessors. By extension, Löfving has also argued that the *gode män* recorded on some Viking Age rune-stones were also in their *lið*, although this name is more widespread, having apparently spread from England to all parts of Scandinavia.[90] It was still in use in Norway in the High Middle Ages.[91] With more advanced government and a dominating position in the Baltic, Denmark continued to exert a powerful influence over Sweden after the disintegration of Knud's heterarchy. The influence was no doubt increased through conversion efforts, many missionaries to pagan Sweden travelling from Denmark and Norway, Sweden's Church ultimately being subordinate to the archbishopric of Lund. Saxo implies that the Swedes were still half-pagan in his account of Magnus's attack on a Swedish temple, although this account contains suspect classical elements.[92] Both Norwegians and Danes used the suppression of paganism as an excuse for raids on Sweden in the early twelfth century.

In addition, as the result of intermarriage between the Swedish and Danish ruling families, by the twelfth century much land in Sweden was owned by members of the ruling Danish house, and this remained the case in the mid-thirteenth century.[93] The election of Magnus Nielsen as king by the *götar*, referred to above, must have owed something to his descent from King Inge the Elder and his holding of lands in Västergötland as a result, but was presumably 'natural' for Västergötland, if not the whole of Götaland, as there was a long-standing tradition of Danish overlordship there. Magnus does not appear in any Swedish king-list, but Saxo's account is earlier than these and also plausible. Earlier in the same book (13) he gives a simplified but basically correct account of the problems that led to hostilities between Swedish and Danish kings. The division of land among Inge's daughters, permitted by Scandinavian law if he died after his son or sons, left them in personal control of this land.

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[90] Löfving 2001a p. 93, and on *thegnar*, *drengar* and *gode män* in general, pp. 80–94.
[91] See Helle 1972 pp. 20–25.
[92] Saxo 13.5, p. 120. See note 45, p. 307.
[93] The *Liber Census Daniae* of c. 1240, the reign of Valdemar II in Denmark, lists three types of estate held in Sweden—although Knud Magnussen had been forced to sell lands, probably to Sverker, some of these may have ultimately derived from Margareta's inheritance.

One of them, Margareta, was then married to Niels of Denmark, father of Magnus, resulting in his subsequent holding of lands within Västergötland.[94] Magnus was soon expelled from the kingship, but his son Knud again used the lands when at war with Sven Grade during the 1150s. Landholding nobles from this region therefore had divided loyalties. No form of Danish overlordship such as that over Swedish 'sub-kings' a century earlier existed in the twelfth century, but there were frequent Danish interventions in internal Swedish conflicts, some perhaps linked with the desire to protect Danish-owned landholdings.

Just as early attempts to unite Denmark may have resulted from the threat posed by the Frankish empire in the ninth century, so Danish attempts to achieve hegemony in Scandinavia produced a reaction in Norway and Sweden. Adam of Bremen tells of an alliance against Sven Forkbeard between Erik Segersäll ('the victorious') of Sweden and Mieszko of Poland (or possibly his son Boleslav), sealed by his marriage to Mieszko's daughter.[95] Danish attempts to interfere in Sweden frequently foundered because they could not impose their authority on Svealand, the notoriously independent *svear* seemingly being even less willing to accept a Danish overlord than to accept an interfering king from Götaland.

Local laws and traditions there were, even nobility whose loyalties were divided between Swedish and Danish kings, but by the eleventh century there was also a strong tradition that the kings of Götaland and Svealand were the same; in this sense Västergotland already had a closer link with Svealand than with Skåne or Halland, although economic links with them were much closer, closer even than with Östergötland.

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[94] Saxo 13.1, pp. 108–09.

[95] ABG 2:34, pp. 63–64. The text telling of this does not exist in all versions of the manuscript. Adam records the alliance as with Boleslav, as does Thietmar of Merseburg: see Thietmar 8:39, pp. 216–17. Thietmar says Boleslav gave his sister to Erik in marriage. However, the date of the Polish-Danish conflict, 985–86 (deriving from the Danish capture of Wollin and founding of Jomsburg), suggests that the arrangements were made by Mieszko (d. 992). Possibly the daughter did not marry Erik until after his death. She is unnamed in these sources, but was later known as Sigrid Storråda. According to Jasiński 1990, her original name was Świętoslawa.

2.6. *The arrival of Christianity*

Sweden was Christianised even later than Denmark and Norway, the last pagan king, Blot-Sven ('Sacrifice-Sven', so-called because he allegedly carried out pagan sacrifices), having reigned for three years, probably during the 1080s.[96] Some scholars have doubted his existence, as the Icelandic *Hervararsaga* is probably the source for all later versions of his tale, but there is no inherent improbability in it, since some resistance to Christianity would be expected, particularly in Svealand. Blot-Sven's authority is unlikely to have extended beyond Svealand, as King Inge the Elder, whom he had driven out from there, installed himself in Västergötland before returning to take his revenge. As elsewhere in early and high medieval Europe, it appears that the Church adopted a deliberate strategy of converting the highest strata first in order then to convert the remainder of society.[97] Early written sources from outside Sweden, such as Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae* emphasise the role of kings such as Inge in the conversion process, and many of the early mission centres were associated with them, including Skara, Sigtuna and Birka. In other areas trading centres such as Köping on Öland may have fulfilled a similar function to these early mission centres, but evidence for this is poor.[98] The first Swedish king to be baptised was Erik Segersäll, during his period of victory against Denmark; but he reverted to his pagan ways after being driven back to Uppland. Erik may have converted to Christianity either as a condition of his marriage to the Polish princess 'Sigrid', or under

[96] Hervarar saga 16, p. 71, The late eleventh-century part of the VgL king list (VgL 1, 4) is probably built on this.

[97] P. Sawyer 1991a p. 139. An exception was Iceland, where the decision to adopt Christianity was made by the *ting*.

[98] See Hallencreutz 1991 pp. 27–29. There is no evidence of a wooden church here, but the Tingflisa rune-stone gives evidence of Christian activity before the building of the stone church in the mid twelfth century. The names of the brothers are characteristic of the pagan period: 'Tover and Torsten and Torfast, these brothers placed this stone over their father Gunfus. God help his soul.' Other rune-stones and fragments on the island also have Christian iconography or runes. Whether Öland was an early part of the diocese of Linköping is not clear, but the bishop was later the most important landowner on the island: see Herman Schück 1959 pp. 280–87.

her influence.[99] Olof Eriksson Skötkonung, probably Erik's son, was the first who truly embraced the new faith. He established a bishopric at Skara, but not in Sigtuna, his *kungsgård* in Uppland, perhaps because of the difficulties in converting the locals there. According to Adam of Bremen, Stenkil achieved this in the 1060s.[100]

The best evidence of Christian activity before the *socken* (parish) division is provided by rune-stones, arguably family relics, and their inscriptions or Christian symbols. Judging by their distribution, Christianity became established first in Västergötland, shortly afterwards in Östergötland, then spread to Svealand. Many rune-stones give the names of those who erected them, possibly local landowners. Some were built into later churches or placed in graveyards, and a few are near evidence of early (eleventh- or early twelfth-century) wooden churches.[101] Others with Christian symbols in places where no evidence of wooden churches has been found may mark the sites of local meeting places for early Christians, although this seems doubtful as their inscriptions indicate that their primary purpose was as memorial stones.[102] It is not so easy to determine whether the initiative in early church building came from bishops, who needed priests to control the spread of the faith in different parts of their dioceses, or from local converts. Early tradition saw local cooperatives organised through the *ting* as the builders of local churches, but this still fails to tell us who might have been behind their actions.

Extant written sources give a strong impression that German missions played the key part in conversion of the Swedes, but it is by no means certain that this was the case. A number of high medieval legends tell of early English missions. English missionaries played a key role in converting the Danes, and some went to Sweden also.

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[99] Sigrid's father Mieszko I had also converted to Christianity as a result of his marriage to Dubrowka, daughter of Boleslav of Bohemia, in 965, either as a condition of alliance or under her influence. See Manteuffel 1982 p. 50. Such marriage alliances frequently played a part in conversion; another such contemporary marriage was that of Vladimir Sviatoslavich of Rus to Anna Porphyrogenita (daughter of Byzantine Emperor Basil II) in 987, and an important earlier example was that of Æthelbehrt of Kent (although he may not yet have been king) to Bertha of Frankia in c. 580.

[100] ABG 4:28, p. 261.

[101] For instance, U 978, used as an altar table at Gamla Uppsala, Uppland, or Sm 169, which mentions Kettilbjörn, built into the wall of Ljungby church, Småland.

[102] For instance, Sm 163 (Arby, Småland), names Bove and Kettilbjörn. Here there are also the remains of a wooden church.

During the reign of Knud the Great their influence must have been particularly strong, but the first dioceses were placed under the see of Hamburg-Bremen, which had also been responsible for the mission to Birka. The *Västgötalagen* bishop list, which takes a different perspective from Adam's *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, lists the first two and the eighth and ninth bishops of Skara as English. The last, Härvard, was bishop at the end of the eleventh century. Thereafter come two bishops from Götaland, Adalvard and Styrbjörn. No Germans are listed. Even Adam names Thurgot, a Dane, as the first priest of Skara, when the church was created in Olof's reign. Hamburg-Bremen achieved its dominance during the mid-eleventh century, when nine new bishops were created for Denmark and six for Sweden by Archbishop Adalbert, but the establishment of another archbishopric in Lund in 1103–04 was to undermine this.[103]

The arrival of the new religion was marked first by rune-stone inscriptions, then by wooden churches, which may have accompanied the dividing of the landscape into *socknar* (parishes).[104] Christian religion had long been established in Gotland, and had taken hold in Götaland earlier in the eleventh century, while Småland was an outlying region between Denmark and Götaland. Because the building of ecclesiastical *socknar* was such a long drawn out process, no single basis for their size or location can be established. However, there is no evidence anywhere that the medieval church *socken* division was inherited from a pre-Christian administrative district, even if the word may be older.[105] Some believe that it derived from eleventh-century English ecclesiastical usage, possibly during the reign

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[103] Erik Segersäll's marriage may also have brought some Slavic influence on conversion. Erik's probable son, Olof, was also married to a Slavic princess, the Obodrite 'Estrid', and he took the daughter of a Wendish ruler, Edla, as concubine, but both were probably pagans. There is even a possibility of Byzantine influence in eastern Sweden, although this is controversial.

[104] See Chapter 6.

[105] See Brink 1990 pp. 68–69, and T. Andersson 1992a pp. 115ff., for a brief overview of this problem. The word may go back to the pre-Christian era, related to the verb *söka* (Dan., Nor., *søke*), now meaning 'seek', 'go to', when it had a connection to judicial functions (cf. *þingsokn* = *tingslag*). The Swedish word *socken* (pl. *socknar*, Dan., Nor. *sogn* or (Nor.) *sokn*, OSw *sokn*), referring to a district with its own church, a parish, may come from this *ting* district use. In Iceland *þing* was an old word for parish, and now means 'assembly'. If the word *sokn* came to Scandinavia during Denmark's mission period, it may derive from OE *socne* (*cyric-socne* = church assembly-district, parish): see Hall and Meritt 1960 p. 69.

of Knud the Great, but this too is uncertain. *Socken* organisation may be related to *tionde* (tithe) taxation, but there is no evidence that this was successfully imposed anywhere in Scandinavia before the twelfth century. *Socknar* usually corresponded to the estates of landowners, within which they built the churches.

There are hints in a number of sources that resistance to the new religion was still strong in Svealand when Sverker was crowned king in c. 1132.[106] With the decline of the rune-stone fashion in Svealand at the end of the eleventh century some tombs were inscribed in runes, such as that at Botkyrka. To judge by the distribution of rune-stones, rune-inscribed cists and the first known churches, at the beginning of the twelfth century the new religion was still weak in areas of Svealand which were distant from the Mälar river and lake system, such as Tiundaland, and also in peripheral regions such as Småland.

[106] See Chapter 11.

CHAPTER THREE

KINGS AND POWER STRUGGLES: SWEDEN FROM 1130 TO 1290

3.1. *The structure of political factions and the basis of their power in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sweden*

Before the latter part of the twentieth century a general assumption was made that the family (Sw. *ätt*) was the most important single social unit in medieval society, as demonstrated by extant laws on inheritance and the example of the Icelandic sagas. Although not always borne out by events, the naming of various Scandinavian factions as, for example 'Hvide klan', 'Sverkerska ätt' and 'Folkungaätt' has reinforced the impression that this was the case. Even in a chiefdom society, such as might be envisaged for the early Iron Age in Sweden, the individual could be a member of a number of social units, which might be based on family, occupation, religion or status in the hierarchy. By the high medieval period, society was becoming more complex. As noted below, views as to how far someone's 'family' or blood-ties extended, or whether ancestors or living relatives were more important, varied depending on social structure.[1] Family links could be strained or broken by rivalry for control of resources or political considerations. Moreover, the influence that personal feelings of like or dislike can exert on a person's political alignment should never be underestimated.

Scandinavian society was stratified long before the twelfth century, with social differences between the living being manifested by differences in house sizes, quality of clothes or weapons and ownership of land, animals or ships. Large burial markers signified the status both of those who were buried and those who buried them, their families. However, during the High Middle Ages in Scandinavia the upper nobility became ever more separated from the rest of society. In a

[1] Unless otherwise stated, I use 'family' in a wide sense to refer to a bilateral kin-group (Sw. *släkt*), including cousins.

sense the period 1150–1300 was one of transition: whereas local leaders had lived among those who farmed the land in the Viking Period, by the end of the Folkung Period in 1365 a small upper elite lived in entirely separate locations from those who worked the land, and in fortified manors which bore no resemblance whatever to the houses of those in the villages. The elite was no longer part of the village unit. Land ownership, the basis of their wealth, had become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. Although it may be argued that the family unit concentrated in the household was the most important single social grouping for the majority of medieval people, its relative importance diminished the higher a person's status in the social structure. The higher nobility, especially adult men, had to travel in order to manage their properties and to carry out the political, religious and military tasks expected of them.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in western Europe social and political structures became increasingly hierarchical and formal in nature. The family came to have an 'authoritarian' structure, in which there was inequality of inheritance between siblings. Rules of inheritance, frequently designed to prevent the fragmentation of land ownership through inheritance by too many sons, ultimately ensured that the number of inheritors who could claim to belong to the highest elite diminished. A noble saw his or her lineage as unilateral, tracing it back through one line of ancestors, and this ancestral lineage was of primary importance in determining a family's status. The aristocracy strove to maintain its own position and preserve its family name. Their social rank was buttressed by ever more elaborate rituals which formalised their status, especially those associated with knighthood. The use of a family name, with its own heraldry and associated symbolism, further distinguished the aristocracy from the rest of society. Correspondingly, it became increasingly important for a noble family to demonstrate that it was of aristocratic origin and to number among its ancestors people of a rank that befitted its station.

The influence of this system was beginning to make itself felt in Scandinavia, particularly in Denmark, in the early twelfth century.[2] In both Denmark and Sweden families that claimed a special status, either as kings or jarls, claimed descent from the Carolingians,

[2] In relation to Norway, see especially Vestergaard 1988 pp. 192–93.

the Swedes via the Danish kings. Although contact between Charlemagne and Danish rulers began in the eighth century,[3] the connection with the line of Charlemagne came through the counts of Flanders, from Knud II's marriage to Adela (d. 1115), daughter of Count Robert Friso and great-granddaughter of Robert II 'the Pious'. The higher aristocracy of Capetian France, in this case the Counts of Flanders, legitimised their superiority by descent from Charlemagne, through either male or female lines,[4] but their view of what this meant may have been different from that of their Scandinavian counterparts. In all cases such descent must have brought prestige, but this was not emphasised in any written work before the late twelfth century in Denmark and later still in Sweden. Although this cannot be proved, its importance to the kings of these countries probably increased when they began to attempt to secure a hereditary monarchy, in other words, when Church teachings on the importance of marriage and western European ideas of 'unilateral' family inheritance began to take hold.

In twelfth-century Denmark, Norway and Sweden a noble could ascertain his or her lineage through the family relationships of both male and female partner. While the man was generally considered to have the most important social role and sons and daughters usually bore a patronymic name, several nobles bore a matronymic name if the prestige of the mother was greater. A given family name was therefore neither exclusive nor lasting. The bilateral kinship system meant that a given family member was related through each parent and grandparent to their groups of relatives and his or her children to the family member's own group. Relations therefore included cousins and their children and formed a network of overlapping family groups, often of varying wealth. Such family links existed through blood relationship, whether this came by 'legitimate' marriage or other liaisons. In a marriage a partner's living family (or 'blood') was more important than belonging to family with a prestigious lineage and equal or higher status, and there were in any case many ways of tracing links back in time.

Such an extended kinship system has several consequences. Equality between siblings in inheritance, still reflected in the Swedish law

[3] See Engholm 1994.
[4] Hallam 1980 pp. 10–11, 20–24.

codes of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, meant that a family patrimony was often fragmented once the head of a family died.[5] While the link within the immediate family, consisting of father, mother and sons or daughters, might be strong, kinship ties were generally weak. Without clear delineation between kinship groups a noble could select allies from amongst a large number of relatives with property. At the same time overlapping families created inheritance problems which provided fertile ground for disputes and feuding, but also usually a relative of those in dispute who might feel obliged to mediate. Since family ties were often established in order to cement alliances, a given political power group would frequently be made up from family members who had a relationship with each other. A political alliance might contain cousins, godsons or daughters, but also friends who did not have (or did not yet have) family links with the other members. Not surprisingly, given the extent to which a single person could trace family links if he or she so wished, relatives are also found among opposing groups. Moreover, the personal element in such alliances was still important, and closeness of relationship was not necessarily a clue to friendship.[6]

Friendship, as referred to in medieval sources, was not merely a matter of like or dislike. It involved certain obligations, particularly the provision of military assistance; this need not be unconditional, and might be given after a council. Friendship was often cemented by the giving of oaths, rituals of greeting or leaving, the giving of gifts and the holding of a *convivium*. Friendship was therefore much closer in meaning to 'alliance' than its modern usage would suggest. It was used to connect equals in rank, but it is also referred to in relations between lords and vassals. In continental Europe disputes frequently arose over precedence as a result of competition to enter the network of friends around a more powerful person, particularly the king. Such friendship ties were arguably even more important

[5] According to Emanuel Todd, this type of family structure, which he calls the 'exogamous community family', is characterised by cohabitation of married siblings with their parents. See Todd 1985 pp. 33–34. That all heirs inherited in Sweden up to the thirteenth century is indicated by the evidence for landholdings, of which substantial ones were acquired by 'illegitimate' sons, enumerated in Appendix 1. See also Vestergaard 1988.

[6] I use friendship here in the sense that it still has in many parts of the world, where the word still has connotations of an ally, rather than its meaning in modern western society, in which 'liking' is a prerequisite.

in a pre-literate society such as twelfth-century Sweden, in which oral and personal decisions were taken, but their importance declined with the advent of literacy and written legal contracts.[7]

Identification of alliances in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sweden is not easy, because of the lack of written sources, but those that do exist give us some clues. Groups of nobles appear in witness lists, as patrons of particular churches or monastic foundations and occasionally in actual lists of allies in political struggles, such as that which names Knut Långe and his group after Erik Eriksson was expelled from Sweden in 1231. The resources of a given family or network can be judged only by the extent of their landholdings and physical manifestations of their wealth. The desire of the elite to demonstrate its power and wealth manifested itself in several ways. Before the accession of the Folkung dynasty in 1250 fortifications were few and small in Sweden and *palatia* rare, but the wealthy nobility could impress the rest of the population through other expensive projects.[8] The most important was the building of churches, which occurred all over Sweden in the twelfth century. The majority must have been built on the initiative of local landowners, although some may have been built by local collectives.[9] Even a wooden church would have stood out in the landscape, and the Romanesque stone churches that replaced them were still more impressive to those who used them, who might even see themselves as dependent upon them for their salvation.

In an economy such as that of Sweden in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries control of economic resources, which consisted largely of land and its produce, could be gained or disposed of through purchase, reciprocal arrangements, and redistribution by a central authority. Although the medieval central authority disposed of wealth mostly through collection of dues and taxes and their redistribution, in twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Sweden it is arguable that more land was acquired through confiscation and then redistributed, although the evidence does not allow us to quantify this. Reciprocal redistribution, which usually involved a personal relationship between the parties, involved gift-giving, particularly to religious institutions

[7] See Haseldine [ed] 1999, especially Althoff pp. 91–105.
[8] The problem of early fortifications and who built them is discussed in Chapter 10.
[9] See Chapter 11.

or associated with marriage arrangements, inheritance or the exchange of goods. Sale and purchase were more impersonal contracts, the basis of a market economy. All these methods were no doubt employed to create the large complexes that already existed in the late thirteenth century.[10]

Ownership of land not only gave a noble wealth in the form of its agricultural, animal and mineral resources, but also some control over its inhabitants, in particular the right to call on them for military service. Clearly one aim of any landholder was to increase the total value of his landholdings (often, but not necessarily, corresponding to the area of land), but many transactions, particularly exchanges, also occurred in order to concentrate landholdings into fewer complexes.[11] This not only made administration of an owner's lands easier, but speeded up the process of raising forces in a given area when the lands had to be protected, especially in times of general disorder that often arose in a civil war, when neighbours felt able to conduct private feuds with less fear of punishment.[12] On the other hand, there were advantages in acquiring estates that were dispersed over the different *land* in the realm, as this enabled a kindred or individual to increase its influence over the monarchy, possibly even to control it. This was clearly the objective of Bo Jonsson Grip's acquisitions of land in the fourteenth century.[13]

The impetus behind the creation of alliances, which often equated to family ties, was to secure control of wealth but also influence in

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[10] Rahmqvist 1996. Rahmqvist has shown clearly, with special reference to the noble holdings of northern Uppland, that such complexes existed earlier than previously thought. With less documentation, Andrae (1960) had earlier suggested this, and Herman Schück (1950) had also drawn attention to large ecclesiastical estates in the thirteenth century.

[11] I use 'complex' to refer to a group of landholdings linked to form one unbroken area (as opposed to a scattered collection of landholdings in the same region) under the same ownership.

[12] Because of the lack of written sources, there is little detailed evidence of such minor warfare from Sweden in this period, but it may be assumed that the same applied as, for instance, in Iceland during the Sturlunga Period. As an example Sigurðsson observes that before the battle of Örlygsstaðir in 1238, although the Sturlungar held more lands than their enemies, with possibly twice the population, this had not been consolidated into a cohesive domain. The result was that the Haukdælir and Ásbirningar were able to muster 1700 men in a relatively short time, as opposed to 1000 by Sturla and his allies, who suffered an overwhelming defeat: Sigurðsson 1999b p. 81.

[13] Emilsson 2005 pp. 20–21.

the decision-making process. This may be as true now as it was in the Middle Ages, but it should be borne in mind that interaction within medieval power structures was governed by ritual and belief in a divinely ordained social order. Appointments were made by both king and nobles through favouritism and nepotism, negative concepts nowadays, but entirely natural in the high Middle Ages. The king was expected to support his kin and his friends. Closeness to the king, moreover, was almost an end in itself, since he, in a sense, embodied a community, the kingdom. There is no evidence that the state yet existed as an abstract entity.[14] It might be expected that the Swedish high nobility, those listed in our sources as *duces*, would have created their own courts in imitation of the king's, as elsewhere in Europe, but evidence for this is lacking before 1250.[15]

3.2. *Contenders for the kingship*

After the death of Magnus Nielsen in 1134, and with the exception of the brief reign of Magnus Henriksen in 1160–61, two families contended for the kingship in Sweden, those of Sverker and Erik (*Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten*). The so-called *Folkungaätten* first appears in sources as a major factor in the power struggle with the appointment of Birger Brosa as 'dux sweorum et guttorum' towards the end of the twelfth century, although his family was not to gain the kingship until 1250 and there is no evidence that this was considered before the period of Birger Jarl.[16] The name *Folkungaätten* is a fifteenth-century construction, whose place in history was sealed by Johannes Messenius at the beginning of the seventeenth century, not to be confused with that used earlier for its enemies, *folkungar*. No certain

[14] Kings were generally referred to as 'kings of the *svear* and *götar*', of the peoples, rather than 'of Sweden'. Duby traces the change in France, arguably one of the most cohesive of European kingdoms by the thirteenth century, to the twelfth century, when *natio* and 'France' begin to be referred to, as opposed to 'the Franks', but the change occurred much later in Sweden. See Duby 1991 pp. 199–204. Lagerroth (1947 pp. 150–53) has argued that the increasing use of such terms as 'men of the realm' in the fourteenth century marks the beginning of loyalty to country as opposed to king in Sweden.

[15] See Chapter 9.

[16] I use the name Birger Jarl only to refer to Birger Magnusson, who became jarl of the realm in 1248. His uncle Birger Brosa was also a jarl.

qualification of candidature for the kingship is recorded from the twelfth century, nor is this clearly spelt out in the later *landskapslagar*. However, given the successions that are known of, it may be assumed that descent from previous kings was necessary, as was the case in Norway. There it was not necessary to be a child of parents married according to Church ritual, and the number of candidates was therefore often large enough to cause conflict, since regional *ting* frequently chose different claimants. This resulted in a series of internal wars known as *borgerkrigene*. Since Church dogma on the importance of correctly conducted marriage had not yet been absorbed into Norway sufficiently to restrict inheritance, we may be sure that it had not yet penetrated into Sweden. In Norway the ultimate arbiter in gaining the kingship was military strength—hence the election at the Borgarting in 1165, managed by the Danish king Va1demar I when his fleet appeared offshore in Viken. However, like other twelfth- and thirteenth-century Danish efforts to secure the Norwegian or Swedish kingship for their candidates, this proved unsustainable without support within the country itself. Arguably, despite its earlier Christianisation, the formidable physical barriers of Norway's mountain ranges meant that it was even more regionalised than Sweden.

Descent from Charlemagne may have been important as a matter of prestige, but descent from previous kings was of more immediate importance for a claimant to the Swedish throne. Unlike the situation in Norway, there is no known case of a son from unmarried parents claiming the Swedish kingship, but, as will be seen, descent through the female line could carry as much weight as descent through the male. One of the families that battled for the throne in the period 1150–1250, the *Erikska ätten*, could claim decent from earlier kings through the female line, in particular from Stenkil, who died c. 1066.[17] Magnus, son of the Danish king Niels, also inherited a claim through his father's marriage to Margareta Fredkulla, daughter of Inge the Elder, son of Stenkil. Margareta had previously been married to the Norwegian king Magnus Berrføtt, and Niels was to marry Ulfhild, widow of the former Swedish king Inge the Younger, after Margareta's death. Saxo suggests that Magnus was chosen as king by the *götar*, an illegal election, because the right of election

[17] ABG 2:3, pp. 63–64. Adam says 'at that time', after telling of the deaths of Tostig and Harold and the victory of William the Bastard in England.

belonged to the *svear*.[18] Later, in 1160, another Danish-born magnate, Magnus Henriksen, also claimed the Swedish kingship because of his descent from Inge the Elder. The origin of the *Sverkerska ätten* is altogether more obscure. It may be that the first King Sverker also traced his descent to a former king; if so no evidence of this has survived. His marriage to Ulfhild, once again a widow after the death of Niels, may well have strengthened a weak claim to the kingship.

The families of all those who contended for the Swedish kingship after 1130 held substantial lands in either Götaland or Denmark. There is less evidence for the landholdings of the *Sverkerska ätten*, *Erikska ätten* or *Folkungaätten* before 1250 than there is for those of the Danish kings in Sweden, the most important records being contained in a register of all lands and the taxes owed both to the king and to the crown, the *Liber census Danie*, also known as *Valdemar II's jordebog*.[19] This records the possessions of Valdemar I in Sweden, and how he came to own them, thereby providing some evidence as to which Swedish families owned or inherited them, since the connection between Danish and Swedish royalty was close. Much of Valdemar I's inheritance in Sweden derived ultimately from Margareta Fredkulla, daughter of King Inge, and 'Sigrid Storråda', queen of Erik Segersäll and Sven Tveskæg, but he probably also acquired lands through his marriage to Sofia, Sverker I's stepdaughter, when she inherited from him.[20] As a result, throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Danish kings held extensive lands in both parts of Götaland. Saxo's statement that the enmity between Danish and Swedish kings was

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[18] Saxo 13: 5, p. 119 and n. 38, p. 303.

[19] The codex in its extant form is a collection of texts, completed by c. 1300. See KVG I–III. The Swedish possessions are listed on pp. 25–26 of the Text section of KVG Ias follows:

BLEKYNG. Hee sunt possessions Regis Waldemari I in Swethia. In Arem .xvi. octonarij (åttingar). Hallæstathæ .viij. octonarij. Guluæ .viij. octonarij. Rynkebu .iij. octonarii. Hwalsbyargh .viij. octonarij. Jstath .iij. octonarij. Cnæbu .vi. octonarij. Burghær .iij. octonarij. Wighbu .xxiiij. octonarij. Vluæruth .vi. octonarij. Cnæbu in Thyustæ .ij. octonarij. Preter aia multa que pertinent ad Syghridlef. Et preter illas possessions quas Bulizlaws hereditauit mortua patre suo Swærcone antiquo. Et mortuo dicto Bulizlauo easdem possessions hereditauit soror eius Sophia regina Danica mater regus Waldemari II. Et sciendum quod omnes predictas possessions. Dedimus duci Kanuto preter herediatem Bulizlaui.

[20] The name Sigrid Storråda is almost certainly an invention. It appears in *Heimskringla* and the B17 King List, but more reliable in this respect are Thietmar of Merseberg and Adam of Bremen, who say the queen was a daughter of Boleslav Chobry of Poland. Her Polish name was probably Świętosława. See Appendix A.1:1.

the result of this is a fair judgement, although it was not the only reason.[21] The situation was analogous to that between Anglo-Norman England and France in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the king of England owned large tracts of land in the French kingdom, and commanded more resources than its king. As Sawyer pointed out, the respect in which the Danish king was held by successive Swedish kings is demonstrated by the fact that his extensive lands were further expanded as late as the mid-twelfth century and their integrity maintained.[22] To some extent this must have been a case of self-preservation, as failure to respect the integrity of these landholdings would have invited invasion, but it may also have reflected a general respect for the rules of inheritance and for the rights of landholders. Nevertheless, lack of guarantees for these rights may have been a contributory reason for some of the Danish or Danish-supported invasions that attempted to prevent a change of ruler, for instance, those of 1210 and 1276.

The lands of the two families that vied for the Swedish kingship between 1156 and 1223, *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten*, are difficult to identify, particularly those of the latter. Many of these possessions subsequently passed into the hands of the *Folkungaätten*, who inherited them through strategic marriages, or possibly gained them through confiscations, and whose male line survived longer than either. The twelfth-century lands of all three families must be deduced as far as possible from the *Liber Census Daniae*, records of donations to ecclesiastical establishments and documented landholdings of descendants. Fortunately there are records for this period, even if sparse, which means that at least the bare outlines of the situation and the power struggles which occurred around the throne can be ascertained. It is clear that the majority of *Sverkerska ätten* landholdings were in Östergötland, but there is evidence of isolated *gårdar* in Västergötland, Södermanland and Småland. The pattern of landholdings, if not the number that can be identified, is very similar to that of the thirteenth-century *Folkungaätten*, whose lands were concentrated in west-central Östergötland, Rekarne (north-western Södermanland) and Närke, but also extended into Småland. However, it is very difficult to ascertain how much of this land the family owned before the

[21] Saxo 13:1, p. 110.
[22] P. Sawyer 1991a p. 57.

reign of Knut Eriksson (1167–96). The very few *Erikska ätten* lands that can be identified are in the region of north-eastern Västergötland, alongside a few *gårdar* in Södermanland and north of the Mälar waterway. The regions where the lands of all three families were concentrated were therefore those of heavy settlement and large village units in the late Iron Age.

While some transference of land from *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten* to the *Folkungaätten* can be discerned in records of intermarriage and land sales or exchanges, some must also have occurred as a result of confiscations after unsuccessful rebellions. In the twelfth century these were by members of the *Sverkerska ätten* against Knut Eriksson, who was probably supported throughout by Birger Brosa. In the thirteenth century his nephew Birger Jarl Magnusson almost certainly confiscated large amounts of land from the *folkungar* rebels, some of whom were descended from Erik Jedvardsson, the first king of the *Erikska ätten*. As discussed below, among the motivations of those who played important roles in the struggles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly Birger Brosa and his brothers, must have been a desire to achieve dominance within Östergötland. We have few details of twelfth-century disputes over land other than those between monasteries and lay people in their vicinity, but it is likely that disputes between great landowning families occurred.

It would be unwise to assume, and improbable, that all members of these kin groups were absolutely loyal to one another, particularly as some must have had divided loyalties as they were bound to more than one. Unfortunately detailed evidence of interaction between individuals is virtually non-existent before 1250. There are extant witness lists from charters, donor lists and other documents, which might be expected to reflect local alliances, as has been demonstrated, for instance, for contemporary Denmark. Birger Brosa and both his brothers appear together in several such lists.[23] Unfortunately a number of the witnesses in Swedish documents from the twelfth

[23] For instance, DS 65, in which the witnesses are Stefan, archbishop of Uppsala, William, bishop of Strängnäs, Birger Jarl and his brothers Magnus and Karl, Finvid Stryker, Sven, Sigtrigg and others. This is the first list in which the three known sons of Bengt Snivel appear, possibly because Magnus and Karl were too young before this. Finvid Stensson and Sven Owen appear in a previous list alongside Birger, Sven possibly in two, if he is the same person as Sven brother of Eskil. Birger and his brothers also appear together in DS 67, DS 70 and DS 116. In DS 113 only Birger and Karl appear.

century are otherwise unknown, and often appear only once. For all but the most important documents, regional groupings may reflect availability of sufficiently notable people to attend a signing rather than political affiliation, and there are simply insufficient documents from Sweden to be used as evidence of this, except as reinforcement for the evidence of known events.

3.3. *The reign of Sverker the Elder c. 1132–1156*

The circumstances surrounding the accession of Sverker are obscure, but his reign ended a period of confusion and short-lived kings, which had continued since the death of Inge the Elder in c. 1110.[24] Sverker's predecessor, Magnus Nielsen, must have claimed the kingship in 1129, the same year when he married the Polish princess Rycheza (Dan. *Rickiza*, Sw. *Rikissa* or variants).[25] Magnus was clearly not an acceptable candidate for the *svear*, since they selected another, according to the *Västgötälagen* king list a certain Ragnvald, who was then killed by the *götar*.[26] There must be some doubt whether Magnus ever had any real authority outside Västergötland, let alone in Svealand. His own priorities lay elsewhere, in Denmark, where his father Niels was king. Sverker was provided with the opportunity to become king by this preoccupation, and seized his chance at some point between 1131 and 1134, when both Niels and Magnus were killed. The *sueones*, according to Saxo, were willing to elect Sverker because he was preferable to the foreigner Magnus Nielsen.[27]

Not much is known about the reign of Sverker, but some light can be thrown on his policy from monastic sources and Danish and

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[24] This period is very obscure. Inge's successors were Inge the Younger (and Hallsten?), when Blot-Sven may also have reigned in Svealand for three years, Filip, and probably Ragnvald. See Íslendingabók, Landnamabók 10, p. 25, the VgL king list and Hervarar saga 16, pp. 70–71. There had been a previous period of instability between the reigns of Stenkil and Inge the Elder: see *Hervarar saga* 15 pp. 67–70 and ABG 3.52 pp. 197–98.

[25] Saxo 13: 5 p. 119 and n. 39 pp. 303–04. Rycheza (sometimes rendered in an older spelling, Ryksa) was a daughter of Boleslav III (1087–1138), Prince of Poland, and Salome, daughter of Heinrich of Berg, Count of Swabia. She is more well known by her 'Danish' name Rickiza ('Swedish' Rikissa).

[26] The death of 'Ragvald' is dated to 1132 by Messenius, but either he or his source may have invented dates to enable the entry of undated but recorded events into their annals. See MSI 15, p. 23.

[27] Saxo 13: 10, p. 138.

Norwegian annals and sagas. There are indications that his accession after Magnus's death may not have been uncontested. Of most interest is a document from 1268, which refers to a border treaty between Harald Gille, king of Norway, and a King Karl.[28] This may be a mistake for 'jarl', in which case Karl was probably Karl Sunesson, who is named as jarl in Västgötaland in *Heimskringla*, and was later traditionally referred to as king, though not in any documentary source. In the *Västgötalagen* king list the land is said to have been governed by its *lagman* and *lanzhöfðengiær* after the removal of Ragnvald. The eleventh *lagman* in the lagman list is Karl of Edsvära, who must have been Karl Sunesson. *Heimskringla* says he led the *götar* (*gauta*) in an invasion of Bohuslän during the reign of the Norwegian king Inge, and was defeated in Króka forest.[29] The invasion is also mentioned in an earlier source, *Morkinskinna*, which states that 'Karl Sørkvisson' was supporting Inge's rival Magnus the Blind in a bid to recover his position in Norway.[30] Karl had strong connections with Norway, as he was descended from the jarls of Lade on his mother's side and married Harald Gille's daughter Brigida.[31] In the extant manuscript of *Morkinskinna* the name Sunesson appears to have been confused with *Sørkvisson* (Sverkersson), either an error or a deliberate 'correction'.[32] Gallén made a very tentative suggestion that the name Sunesson might be a clue to a family link between Karl and Sverker, since the name Sune was common within the *Sverkerska ätten*, but there is no good evidence for this. However, Karl's period in Västergötland does appear to have coincided with Sverker's rule. In 1131 a certain Erik, called 'gothorum prefectus' by Saxo, probably

[28] N. Beckman 1912 p. 16, and Lönnroth 1940 p. 52.

[29] SSH 1, *Saga Inga konungs og bræðra hans* 2, p. 767.

[30] Morkinskinna 87, p. 374. Apparently, or so this source would have us believe, Magnus was in the habit of telling foreigners that Norway was there for the taking, as he afterwards persuaded the Danish king Erik Emune to launch an attack, with equally disastrous results.

[31] SSH 2, *Saga Inga konungs og bræðra hans* 22, p. 785. Snorri also claims that Brigida was previously married to King Inge (the Younger) Hallsteinsson, but this is impossible. Inge died in c. 1121, and Brigida was either unborn or very young at that time, since her father was born in c. 1103.

[32] The *Morkinskinna* Manuscript (Gamle kongelinge samling 1009 fol., Den Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen) has been dated to the second half of the thirteenth century. Scholars agree that this derived from an older exemplar, also drawn on by *Fagrskinna* and Snorri in *Heimskringla*. See Morkinskinna pp. 5–11, and concerning the problems with the saga of Sigurðr slembidjákn, pp. 46–56.

meaning jarl of Västergötland, was driven from the region.[33] Whatever their relationship, there are no indications that Karl's attack on Bohuslän was sanctioned by Sverker; if it was not the incident provides evidence of how limited his power was in Västergötland. Presumably after Karl's death his pre-eminent position there was taken by Erik Jedvardsson, who may have been a rival of Karl's. One or other (or both) might have been Sverker's ally in Västergötland, but if Erik was, he had obviously changed his stance by the 1150s. It has been asserted that the early version of *Västgötalagen*, whose codification was attributed to Eskil Magnusson, himself presumably associated with the *lanzhöfðengiær*, is generally more favourable to the *Sverkerska ätten* than the *Erikska ätten*, a possible reflection of hostility to interference from kings. Like the *svear*, the local landowners of Västergötland probably preferred to have a king who resided outside their territory.

Sverker's first marriage was to the widow of Niels. According to Saxo, Sverker had already seduced Ulfhild before Niels had died.[34] To judge by their other actions, such behaviour may not have been beyond twelfth-century rulers, but Saxo had an interest in denigrating Niels and everyone associated with him, as he represented the interests of a rival family in the dynastic struggles of Denmark after 1134. The Cistercian *Exordium Magnum* gives a different picture of Ulfhild, as the 'devout lady and Queen of Sweden'.[35] She is credited with asking Bernard of Clairvaux to send monks to Sweden. Three monasteries were established in Götäland in 1142–44, a considerable outlay in personnel for Bernard of Clairvaux. The reasons probably lie in a coincidence of factors: as a result of the feud between the Pope and the Emperor the archbishopric of Lund had finally been given authority over Sweden in 1139, and its new archbishop Eskil had already shown himself enthusiastic in founding new monasteries in Denmark. He must have been aware of the weakness of Christianity in Sweden. Further impetus came from King Sverker and his queen Ulfhild. Genuine religious zeal may have lain behind their actions, not to mention concern for their salvation; kings were no doubt aware that their paths to power often involved deeds for

[33] Gallén 1985 pp. 59–60. This Erik is probably identical with the Danish Jarl of Falster of 1131–45, who was implicated in the murder of King Knud.
[34] Saxo 13:10, p. 138.
[35] Exordium Magnum, 258.

which penitence was required. Furthermore, there was a belief in the power of intercessory prayer, especially if practised by holy men in institutions designed to allow them the necessary seclusion and peace. But there were also solid political reasons for founding monasteries. In order to extend royal power and influence a more thorough Christianisation of the country was necessary, and if the word was spread by men who had not only a mutual interest in supporting the authority which protected them, but actually owed a debt to it, so much the better.

Although the most well-known missionary to Sweden, Ansgar, was a monk himself, no monastic foundations date to his period (c. 830–865). The first monastic foundations in Scandinavia were probably Nidarholm on an island near Trondheim, Selja further south on the west coast of Norway (c. 1100), the cathedral chapter of Odense (c. 1095) and Vreta monastery in Östergötland. Its founders were Inge the Elder and Queen Helena, who may have drawn inspiration from their Norwegian connections.[36] The oldest church has been shown to resemble the earliest Linköping cathedral, which suggests that Inge may have planned both, Linköping as the diocesan centre and Vreta as the monastic centre nearby, an arrangement closely resembling that at Bergen.[37] The second wave of monasticism in Scandinavia is better documented than the first as a result of the survival of foundation charters and narratives. Some Benedictine cathedral chapters and monasteries were taken over and many new ones were established by Austin canons (following the rule of St Augustine) and Cistercian monks (reformed Benedictines from Citeaux and Clairvaux). The influence of the Austin canons in Sweden was limited, although Herman Schück has suggested that they attempted to introduce their rule for the cathedral chapter of Skara.[38] Monasticism was truly established in Sweden when Sverker I and Ulfhild invited the Cistercians to establish communities there.

Some confusion surrounds the date and nature of the monastic foundations of Sverker's reign. The annals of Ryd say that a community of monks was sent to Alvastra in 1142, and that communities were sent to Nydala and Herrisvad (in Denmark) in 1144. The *Annales Colbazenses* say that monks went to both Alvastra and Nydala in 1143,

[36] Ahnlund 1945 pp. 301–02, 319–20.
[37] See Curman and Lundberg 1935, and Lidén 1994 pp. 45–49.
[38] Herman Schück 1984 pp. 136–93.

while the *Narratiancula de fundatione monasterii Vitaescholæ in Cimbria* (*Tale of the foundation of Vitskøl monastery*) associates the foundation of Alvastra with that of Lurö. Nydala is not mentioned in the *Exordium Magnum*, indicating that a foundation at Nydala may not have been the original intention of Bernard. Nydala was in a quite remote location in Småland, in keeping with the spirit of the Cistercian movement, whereas Alvastra was in a fertile region of Östergötland among what must have been an already Christianised population, on land which had been donated to Ulfhild as a morning gift. Alvastra was clearly a royal foundation, but Nydala is said to have been the foundation of Bishop Gisle of Linköping, who was a close associate of Archbishop Eskil.[39] Nyberg suggested that Nydala was therefore the inspiration of Eskil and Gisle, who wanted a second monastery which was not beholden to King Sverker, and could fulfil a role more in keeping with the aims of the Church, possibly even helping to Christianise semi-pagan regions of Småland.[40] Something else which may have been in the mind of Eskil, who was only too aware of the unstable conditions in Denmark at the time and presumably knew that the authority of Swedish kings was not secure either, was the possible danger to any foundation too closely associated with one dynasty if that dynasty failed. As a result of Gisle's and Eskil's plans, the community of monks sent from France to Alvastra was very likely split to establish both monasteries.

Both Alvastra and Nydala survived and prospered, but the fate of the other community sent from Clairvaux, to Lurö, was initially very different. The *Narratiancula* gives a clue that the community became a victim of growing rivalry between Sverker, its sponsor, and Erik Jedvardsson. The monks ended up at Varnhem in Västergötland, having moved from Lurö (*Lwdrhe*) in Lake Vänern via Lugnås (*Lwnghas*) in Kinne *härad*. The small island of Lurö was obviously not sufficient to sustain the community, although they had built a church there before they left. But Lugnås was also remote, and in 1150 the monks subsequently acquired better land from a lady Sigrid.[41] Sigrid was

[39] He had been at Eskil's side at the synod of Lund in 1139 and at the dedication of Lund cathedral in 1145: DD 1:2, 77 and Necrologium Lundense p. 50.

[40] Nyberg 2000 pp. 127–29.

[41] 1150 is the date given by the *Annales Ryenses* and the Danish-Swedish *Annales 826–1415*, but France thinks this is the date of the community's arrival in Lurö, from Alvastra. See DMA, pp. 165 and 301, ASMÆ, pp. 32 and 375, and James France 1992 pp. 36–39. Foundation dates are not in any case fixed, as the date

related to Christine, queen of the next king, Erik Jedvardsson, and presumably owned land in Västergötland, whereas the *Sverkerska ätten* held either none or very little. However, having given the monks the land, Sigrid then set about driving them away, under the influence of a powerful local man, according to the *Narratiancula*, possibly Erik. After suffering from blindness and leprosy, the tale continues, she allowed them back. But Christine took over the task of driving the monks from Varnhem with renewed vigour after Sigrid's death, probably soon after Erik's accession. According to the *Narratiancula* her tactics included incitement of the local women to defecate outside the monastery and forcing the abbot to move his scriptorium building. Abbot Henrik asked for help from both the Cistercian General Capital and King Valdemar I, whom he met in Roskilde, and received permission to move to Vitskøl, which his community did in 1158. Erik and Christine then founded a new community at Varnhem, and thus claimed that they were the real founders of the monastery. According to Varnhem's records, some of the best (one might also suspect the most courageous) of the original monks returned from Vitskøl. A new abbot, Laurentius, replaced Henrik. It is notable that the *Narratiancula* blames Christine for the driving off of the first community, thus absolving Erik of this responsibility. The result gave Erik equal prestige as a founder to his rival Sverker, but also, presumably, an abbot who was indebted to him and not to the *Sverkerska ätten*. There is no mention of Sverker's foundation in the *Västgötalagen* king list, which first mentions Varnhem as the burial place of Erik. All indications are that Sverker had little power in Västergötland, and Erik had probably wanted things to stay that way. An anti-Sverker stance seems a more probable reason for the hostility of Christine (and Erik?) to the first Cistercian foundation than her pro-Benedictine sympathies, as suggested by Jarl Gallén, particularly as the monastery was re-founded by Erik and his son Knut showed much favour towards the Cistercians.[42]

In addition to founding monasteries, Sverker worked together with Gisle, the first recorded Swedish bishop of Linköping, to organise

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given may be of the donation, the choice of site, the approbation of the local bishop, the sealing of a charter, or even the laying of the first stones. To make matters more confusing, Cistercian annals usually start the year with the feast of the Annunciation on 25 March, not the usual calendar year.

[42] Gallén 1976 p. 8.

the diocese.[43] It is not possible to say with any certainty when this was established. One theory is that the bishop's seat was moved from Vreta, but this was more distant from Lionga, which is known to have been a pagan cult centre, referred to as 'metropolis civitas Lunda' in 1120 and 'Liunga' in the Florence manuscript.[44] Both places have so-called 'Eskilstuna sarcophagi', clear evidence of Christianisation before the time of Sverker.[45] Sverker and Gisle must be assumed to have had had some personal bond of friendship. However, their highest ambitions were thwarted. In 1153, the year after the papal legate Nicholas Breakspear's visit to Norway, when an archbishop's seat had been established at Trondheim, he visited Sweden. Sverker attempted to establish an archbishopric in Sweden in 1153, according to Saxo, but the attempt failed because the *svear* and *götar* could not agree on a candidate who was ready for such a high post.[46] Probably the plan was that the archbishop's seat should be in Linköping, where the meeting was held, although none of the letters from Pope Anastasius to Sverker mentions this.[47] The idea would presumably not have suited the *svear* nobility. All indications are that they held the right to choose or reject the king, as stated in most of the later law codes.[48] The *svear* no doubt believed that any ecclesiastical centre of Sweden should be in their territory too, if they wanted one at all. In addition, one suspects that the nobility of Västgötaland (including the *Erikska ätten*) and their supporters would not have been enthusiastic about a centre in Sverker's heartland, and obstructed any attempt to appoint an archbishop too favourable to Sverker's cause. It is also possible that the cardinal did not have the authority to establish a Swedish archbishopric, given the situation of Lund, which had been consecrated by Archbishop Eskil in 1145 and thereafter had authority in Sweden.[49] Certainly Saxo's assertion that the people of Sweden were still too barbaric in

[43] DS 38.
[44] Acta Pontificaum Svecica 1, p. 3.
[45] Grave monuments marked with runes. See Neill and Lundberg 1994 pp. 151–52.
[46] Saxo 14:11, p. 382. Saxo says the *svear* and *götar* were unable to agree on a candidate or a city for so dignified an office.
[47] Hermann Schück 1959 pp. 48–49.
[48] See Chapter 4.
[49] Several scholars have preferred this explanation, for instance, Smedberg 1983 pp. 66–67.

their religious practices is unlikely to have been a contributory factor.[50]

The eventual seat of the Swedish archbishop, Uppsala, first became a bishop's seat either shortly before or very early in Sverker's reign. He was credited with the foundation by Bishop Karl of Västerås, who supervised the moving of the see to Östra Aros in 1273, the old cathedral having been badly damaged by fire shortly before 1245. There was certainly a *kungsgård* at Uppsala, as land from it was donated to the cathedral chapter by Sverker Karlsson in 1200.[51] Possibly his grandfather donated land for the establishment of the diocese. As a former centre of paganism (with or without Adam's 'temple'), there were good reasons to make Uppsala a bishopric in place of Sigtuna. Sigtuna is not mentioned as a see after 1134, and the first known bishop of Uppsala, Siward, appears in sources in 1141.[52] According to the *Registrum ecclesiae Upsaliensis* of 1344, there were five bishops before Stefan, the first archbishop: 'The first bishop of Uppsala was Severinus (Siward?), the second Nicholas, the third Sven, the fourth Henry, saint and martyr, who was there in the time of St Erik. The fifth bishop of Uppsala was Kopmannus.'[53]

We have several indications that Sverker's hold on the throne had begun to break down in the early 1150s. The dispute over the establishment of an archbishopric might have been a contributory factor, with many Svealand nobility lining up against him. In addition Sverker was unsuccessful abroad. Of more consequence for his reputation and power than Karl Sunesson's escapade in Bohuslän must have been his intervention in Danish affairs. By his first marriage Sverker had three known sons, Johan, Karl and Sune, and two daughters, Ingegärd and Helena.[54] Ingegärd appears to spent most of her life in Vreta nunnery, becoming prioress shortly after she entered it (in 1162?). Helena joined her after the murder of her husband,

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[50] Saxo 14:11, p. 382.

[51] On old Uppsala and its importance, see Rahmqvist 1986 pp. 254–71. The *kungsgård* was probably also the site of Knut Eriksson's mint at Uppsala.

[52] K.B. Westman 1952 p. 14. Siward had moved to Rastede monastery in Germany by 1141, having been driven from Uppsala by pagans, according to the Rastede Chronicle. See Nyberg 2000 pp. 122–23. See also Chapter 11:1. On the early bishops, see also Hellström 1971 pp. 54–58.

[53] DS 3834: 'Primus episcopus vpsaliensis fuit euerinus Secundus nicolaus, Tercius sueno Quartus sanctus henricus martir qui fuit tempore beati erici, Quintus episcopus vpsaiensis fuit kopmannus.' See also Incerti Scriptoris Sueci Chronicon Primorum in Ecclesia Upsalensi Archiepiscoporum (c. 1330), SRS 3:2, p. 97.

[54] See Appendix 1.

the Danish Knud Magnussen, in 1157. She must have been married to him in the early 1150s. After Ulfhild's death Sverker married Rycheza, widow of Volodar of Minsk and before that of Magnus Nielsen. Knud was the son of Rycheza and Magnus, and Sverker supported him in his bid to gain the Danish throne. Knud's marriage to Helena reinforced this alliance.

The primary reason for Sverker's support was loyalty to his family: While it would have helped him to have a son-in-law on the Danish throne, becoming embroiled in the Danish succession struggle was risky, particularly if Sverker had little real power outside Östergötland and enemies within Sweden. There may have been other contributory factors to the eventual war between Sverker and Sven of Denmark, but his support for Knud must have been the main one. The irresponsible conduct of his son Johan in kidnapping two ladies from Halland and abusing them is unlikely to have been a major factor, even if it did serve to incense certain Danish nobles.[55] Knud's father Magnus had killed Knud Lavard, father of the eventual victor in the struggle for the Danish kingship (in 1157), Valdemar. But initially Knud Magnussen's main rival was Sven, son of King Erik Emune. Both appear together for the first time in sources in 1145, when they were present at the consecration of Lund cathedral. Unfortunately for his cause, Knud suffered repeated defeats at the hands of Sven and Valdemar, and Sven invaded Sweden in 1154, devastating parts of Småland.[56] Sverker's failed venture in Denmark will have done little to strengthen his position, particularly as it resulted in a Danish attack when he had significant problems at home.

It is tempting to see Johan Sverkersson's death (as related by Saxo) at a *ting* meeting as connected with these upheavals. This must have been the time when Erik Jedvardsson made a move to seize the throne. Sverker himself was murdered at Christmas 1156. The *Västgötalagen* king list states that one of his own followers killed him on his way to church.[57] Saxo claims that a *servus* killed him in his bedchamber, and this version is repeated by Innocent III in a letter of 1208.[58] If a plot was behind Sverker's death several candidates might be suggested as instigators, adherents of Erik Jedvardsson (if not Erik

[55] Saxo 14:10, p. 382.
[56] Saxo 14:12, p. 384.
[57] By his *hæstæ swen* on his way to church.
[58] Saxo 13:17, p. 398, and ST 59.

himself) or possibly Sven among them.[59] Saxo blames Magnus Henriksen, who paid for his crime 'shortly afterwards', but there was an intervening period of four years before Magnus seized the throne, and another year before Sverker's son Karl disposed of him. It is interesting that no cult of Sverker is known of, given that he was a murdered king and a benefactor of the Church, possible testimony to his unpopularity when he died. However his reign ended, Sverker's greatest legacy to Sweden was the real beginning of monasticism, arguably the 'beginning of the end' of the Christianisation of Sweden. In terms of royal and ecclesiastical power, Östergötland was now the centre of the Swedish realm.

3.4. *The reigns of Erik Jedvardsson and Magnus Henriksen c. 1156–61*

Erik Jedvardsson's ancestry is unknown, although he was clearly a powerful landowner in Västergötland during Sverker's reign.[60] It is quite likely that he was declared 'king' there before Sverker died. Erik's challenge initiated a new struggle for the Swedish kingship, between his family and Sverker's. There is no evidence that Erik achieved much during his short reign, although he was to achieve a standing after his death which made him much more important, first of all to the *Erikska ätten* and then to the *Folkungaätten*, ultimately as a symbol of the kingdom of Sweden. His status probably originated with his death at or near Uppsala, the most important cult centre of Sweden. He may thus have been honoured there before the accession of his son Knut.

Early historians accepted much of what was written in Erik's legend, but the text in its extant form dates to the fourteenth century.[61] Even his ecclesiastical foundations, apart from the second Varnhem, are in doubt. At some stage a monastic cathedral chapter was created at Gamla Uppsala.[62] The charter issued by Archbishop Peter,

[59] Nyberg has even suggested that the perpetrators might have been pagans, the season of *jul* including January 1156, the pre-Christian time of sacrifice, but if this was the case, Sverker would surely have been declared a saint by the locals, and someone was very successful in suppressing the cult. See Nyberg 2000 p. 136.

[60] The name 'Jedvard' derives from England (Edward), but little more can be said.

[61] For instance, Westman claimed that Erik was the first supporter of the Gregorian Church in Sweden: K.B. Westman 1954 p. 99.

[62] DS 98.

according to Gallén, implies that the chapter was drawn from Benedictine monks (*ordo monasticus*), either from Odense or Vreta. Given the later enthusiasm for Erik Jedvardsson's deeds in his legend, it may be that he founded the chapter. However, neither this nor the Benedictine origin can be certain, although Nyberg is probably right that the chapter was created before the arrival of the Cistercian Stefan as first archbishop of Uppsala in 1164, since, although he may have accepted one which was already in being, he is not likely to have accepted the creation of such an institution.[63] The chapter continued to be favoured by Knut Eriksson, possibly because of a special role not only in fostering Christianity at Uppsala, but in fostering his father's cult. It became a secular cathedral chapter at some time in the early thirteenth century. In addition, a community of monks settled at Viby (near Sigtuna) in 1160, on land donated by Doter, a local lady.[64] This was the first monastery north of the Mälar waterway, a daughter house of Alvastra. Erik confirmed the charter and donated fishing rights, and claimed that he was its founder and protector of the monks.[65] Knut Eriksson later took all this land in exchange for a *mansio* at Säby, with all its fishing rights, forests, meadows and farms, probably between 1174 and 1185.[66] It is more often called Julita, after the local *socken*. The last of the Cistercian monastic foundations in Sweden before the fifteenth century was in Gotland in 1164, at Gutnalia (or Gudvala, Gutvalla, in the *socken* of Ruma, latinised as Roma), a daughter of Nydala, but this has no connection to Swedish kings. It is, however, interesting that it was founded at an ancient *ting* site.[67]

Erik's other legendary contribution to Christianity, his 'crusade' to Finland, is unlikely to have been more than a raid. No doubt, in traditional fashion, he demanded a token acceptance of the new religion by the natives (probably in Suomi proper, Varsinais-Suomi, south-west Finland), before leaving. Somehow his crusade later became combined with a Finnish tale of the martyrdom of Bishop Henrik, who was supposed to have gone with him, but this Henrik has been difficult to identify with any known Swedish bishop.[68]

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[63] Gallén 1976 pp. 11–14, and Nyberg 2000 pp. 182–83.
[64] DMA, *Annales Ryenses* p. 166; DS 51.
[65] DS 63, DS 66.
[66] The name was subsequently latinised to Saby. See DS 65 and DS 69.
[67] DMA, *Annales Colbacenses* p. 10 and *Annales Ryenses* p. 166.
[68] See Suvanto 1987 pp. 149–160.

Erik was defeated and killed by Magnus Henriksen in 1160. Though born in Denmark, Magnus could claim direct descent from Inge the Elder via Inge's granddaughter Ingrid, who was married to Henrik Skadelår ('the lame').[69] After his father's death Erik Jedvardsson's son Knut was forced to flee to Norway, and his betrothed was placed in a nunnery for safety. This was probably Gudhem, which had strong connections with the *Erikska ätten*. Vreta is also a possibility, but was strongly associated with Magnus, as he made at least one donation to it from his lands in the vicinity.[70] Both Magnus and his brother Ragnvald therefore owned land in Östergötland, probably inherited from Inge, but the full extent of their landholdings in Sweden may have been greater.[71] Ragnvald is referred to as jarl by Snorri Sturluson, 'when his brother was king'.[72] Too much cannot be read into the statement, but there is an implication in the wording that Ragnvald was given a jarldom by his brother when he became king. Territorial lordships (if such it was) were often awarded by victors in internal struggles in return for assistance in the Middle Ages, and nepotism was not necessarily frowned upon—in the reign of Sverker the Elder his son Johan may have obtained a similar favour, and Magnus's successor, Karl Sverkersson, may have appointed Ulf, possibly a nephew of his, as *dux* of Svealand. Magnus must have played some part in the machinations of the previous decade or so, but we have only Saxo's assertion concerning the murder of Sverker. Since he and Ragnvald had brothers in Denmark, one of whom was *dux* of Sleswig at this time, and another resident in Jylland, it is possible that Magnus obtained support from there. Reliance on foreign support and his own Danish origin may provide another explanation for his failure to survive much longer than a year as king.

The defeat and death of Magnus Henriksen arguably marks the end of a period in which kings and nobles whose power base lay in Denmark became kings or jarls in Sweden. Alternatively, the end of this period can be seen as 1134, when Magnus Nielsen died, as it is not impossible that Magnus Henriksen had a considerable network of friends and allies in Sweden and held more lands there than in Denmark. Magnus Nielsen, on the other hand, certainly had more

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[69] See Appendix 1.
[70] See K.B. Westman 1952 p. 38, and Ahnlund 1945 pp. 322–25.
[71] Saxo 13:1, pp. 109–10.
[72] SSH 2, *Hákonar saga herðibreiðs* 18, p. 785.

interests in Denmark. Both he and Erik 'gothorum prefectus' were associated with Västergötland. The links between Västergötland and the Danish kingdom were long-standing, and economic links closer than those with Svealand. Arguably, the survival of *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten* dynasties into the thirteenth century brought about the final integration of Västergötland into the Swedish kingdom, not in an administrative sense, but in the sense that the *västgötar* no longer looked to Denmark to find alternatives to rulers they did not trust. Whether the accession of a Västergötland dynasty as kings of *svear* and *götar* contributed to this in itself is a moot point, since Erik Jedvardsson was overthrown by a Danish claimant and there are signs in *Västgötalagen*, compiled in the thirteenth century, that its authors, representatives of the aristocracy, favoured the rival *Sverkerska ätten*. Danish kings continued to hold lands in Sweden, and were no doubt reluctant to concede their influence in Västergötland, but their subsequent periodic invasions must increasingly have been seen there as hostile external interventions, bringing with them the inevitable destruction and misery wrought by medieval armies on the march.[73]

3.5. *Karl Sverkersson c. 1161–67*

It is not known whether Karl Sverkersson supported Magnus Henriksen against Erik Jedvardsson—either way, the two soon fell out, and Magnus was defeated and killed by Karl at Örebro, probably in 1161.[74] According to the *Västgötalagen* king list, Karl Sverkersson's victory was greeted by popular acclaim. Whereas Knut Eriksson seems to have had close links with Norway, Karl maintained an alliance with Valdemar I of Denmark. The Danish king had already married

[73] In the thirteenth century one landowner of Danish royal extraction, Svantepolk Knudsen, became *lagman* of Östergötland and wielded considerable power, but because he had no claim to the Danish throne and his inheritance lay largely in Sweden, so did his interests. This could have been the case with Magnus Henriksen a century earlier, but insufficient is known of his landholdings and connections in Sweden.

There is a close comparison between the uncertain Danish-Swedish frontier and a better documented frontier, that of England and Scotland in the early Middle Ages. The eleventh and twelfth-century kings of Scotland had an ancient claim to Northumberland and Cumbria as parts of the former kingdom of Northumbria, but their repeated invasions and raids did not endear them to the local populace. Conversely, English kings believed they had an ancient right to overlordship over Scotland.

[74] ASMÆ, *Annales 1160–1336*, p. 265. That Karl supported Magnus is unlikely if Magnus was indeed responsible for his father's murder, as Saxo claimed.

Sofia, daughter of Sverker's second wife Rycheza and Volodar of Minsk, and Karl now married Valdemar's niece Christine, daughter of Stig Hvide.

Like his father, Karl's main legacy was his contribution to the Church in Sweden. He was more successful in obtaining an archbishopric for Sweden than his father had been, but not without compromises. He had to make a joint bid with a certain Ulf Jarl, and the archbishop's seat was established at Uppsala in 1164.[75] A Cistercian monk, Stefan, was chosen as its first archbishop, and it was consecrated by Eskil, archbishop of Lund. Since he was founder of Fogdö nunnery and his wife of Viby nunnery near Sigtuna, Ulf must have owned land in Svealand.[76] Karl Sverkersson also had a hand in the foundation of Viby, following in his father's footsteps as a patron of the Cistercian Order.[77] Their joint projects indicate that Ulf was Karl's ally in Uppland. The connection may have been closer than that, if, as suggested by one document, Ulf was a son of Karl's deceased brother Johan.[78]

By the end of Karl Sverkersson's reign the majority of Sweden's medieval monastic foundations were already in place. The initiative in founding monasteries and nunneries in Sweden was taken by kings and nobles, and there is no evidence of popular religious movements leading to their creation. An unusual aspect of 'Cistercian' activity in Sweden was the number of nunneries that followed their rule, at Vreta, Gudhem, Sko, Vårfruberga, Askeby, Riseberga and Solberga. Karl Sverkersson's generosity towards Vreta in 1162 echoed the donations of Valdemar I in Denmark. If it was not already, from that point on Vreta became a nuns' convent, which adopted a Cistercian constitution.[79] A re-founding of it as a nunnery might have been Karl's response to its close association with his predecessor, Magnus Henriksen, who made donations to it. Karl's sister Ingegärd undoubtedly played an important role in the establishment of the nunnery,

[75] DS 49.
[76] Ståhle 1948 pp. 82–84.
[77] Viby moved to Julita in Södermanland in 1144.
[78] *Incerti scriptoris chronicon*. See Appendix 1 for the detail of this.
[79] The period between Inge's donation and 1162 is shrouded in mystery. Since Vreta already had a substantial church and had obviously been wealthy, it may already have been a convent of Benedictine nuns. We have no record of any conflict concerning its change from monastery to nunnery. Nyberg suggests that the creation of a cathedral chapter at Gamla Uppsala by Erik Jedvardsson would have made a change at Vreta easier for Karl Sverkersson. See Nyberg 2000 p. 183.

and remained as its prioress until her death in 1204. Another early royal foundation was the nuns' convent at Gudhem. The nuns' ownership was confirmed by Pope Alexander III during the reign of Knut Eriksson, and he says in the same letter that it was donated 'by Knut, or his brother, or by others, his predecessors'.[80] Possible predecessors would be Karl Sverkersson, Magnus Henriksen, or Erik Jedvardsson. The reign of Magnus was very short, so the founder is likely to have been Erik, particularly as Gudhem was in the diocese of Skara, near his family's lands. In the unlikely event that Karl Sverkersson founded it, and if the plural form of the Pope's reference to predecessors is assumed to be incorrect, it would have represented a second attempt to establish a *Sverkerätt* foundation in Västergötland, the heartland of the rival dynasty, Lurö, having failed and been re-founded earlier.

3.6. *Knut Eriksson c. 1167–95*

Karl Sverkersson was killed on Visingsö in 1167. The event is recorded in several annals, but the circumstances surrounding it are not. Knut Eriksson is explicitly held responsible in the *Västgötalagen* king list, and his subsequent election and the flight of Karl's son Sverker seem to confirm this.[81] Violent seizures of the kingship were common in Scandinavia in this period, and of the records of the event only a papal letter of 1208 has a negative tone, at a time when the papacy favoured Karl's son Sverker in his struggle with Erik, son of Knut.[82] Considering Knut Eriksson's long reign, remarkably little is known about him. Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic sources tell nothing of his rise to power, presumably because it did not involve these regions to any great extent. The *Västgötalagen* king list says:

> Knut was the fifteenth king. He won Sweden by the sword and killed King Karl, King Kol and King Burislev and had many battles against Sweden (*Svea-rike*) and gained the victory in all of them and had a great struggle before he achieved peace in Sweden. Then he was a

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[80] DS 72, . . . *dono regis Canuti vel fratris eius seu aliorum predecessorum suorum*. The letter is dated 19 January, but no year is given. As the place of issue is Anagni, whence other letters were sent in that year, *Diplomatarium Suecanum* suggests 1175.

[81] ASMÆ, *Annales 1160–1336* p. 265, and *Annales 266–1430* p. 277. The latter records Sverker's flight as well his father's death.

[82] ST 59, letter of Innocent III.

> good king, when his power began to grow. And he was king for twenty-three winters and ended his life at Eriksberg in Gäsene. And he lies in Varnhem.[83]

Since Knut Eriksson died on 8 April 1196, the twenty-three year reign would make him king in 1173. The *Flatejyarbók* annals say he reigned for thirty years, which would suggest that he became king shortly after Karl Sverkersson's death in 1167.[84] The discrepancy may be explained by the king list counting his reign either from the first year in which his kingship was undisputed, or from the year of his coronation. The same king list says that Johan Sverkersson, who ruled from 1216 to 1222, reigned for three winters, and he was crowned in 1219. There is a gap of eight years between Karl's death and the coronation, suggesting the possibility that Knut's rule was disputed before this.

The rebels Kol and Burislev were probably sons of Johan Sverkersson.[85] Kol has sometimes been identified with a Kol of Sko, who was an ally of Knut at the time when his exchange of land with Viby took place, in c. 1170. If they are one and the same, Kol did not dispute Knut's rule until after this. At some time after 1171, when he is last named in a papal letter, Jarl Guttorm probably fled to Denmark, as he disappears from Swedish sources, and the only jarl mentioned after this is Birger Brosa.[86] Guttorm appears among the donators to Vreta nunnery, granting land in Dädesjö, in Värend, Småland.[87] According to Saxo, Guttorm was a friend of Karl Sverkersson and had been his emissary to Valdemar I, escorting his bride back to Sweden.[88] Whether he abandoned Karl to assist Knut

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[83] *Fæmtandi war Knutær konogær. Han wan Sweriki mæd swærdhi oc tok aff daghum Karl konogh oc Koll konogh oc Byrisleph konogh oc atti marghær orostær widær Sweriki oc fik alum sighær oc hafdhi mykith arwudi, fyr æn han fek Sweriki mæd ro. Sidtæn war han godhær konongær, ær han tok widær waxæ, Oc tre wintær oc tyghu war han konongær oc læt sit liff i Erexbiærghi i Giæsini. Oc han liggær i Warnem.*

[84] Flateyjarbók 3.

[85] *Liber census Danie* also lists a Burislev, son of Sverker, who was clearly a different person, possibly a son by Sverker's second wife, Rikissa. See Appendix 1. Another possible son of Johan was Ubbe, discussed in Ahnlund 1945 pp. 344–45. Ahnlund presents a tentative theory that Ubbe may have been the same as Ulf Jarl, listed in the *Incerti scriptores chronicon* as brother to Kol and Cecilia (a name that subsequently recurred in the Sverker family).

[86] ST 1, 46. The letter is addressed to the archbishop of Uppsala, his bishops, and Jarl Guttorm, and calls on them to prevent the Finns from lapsing into apostasy.

[87] In Rasmus Ludvigsson's *Brevis historica narratio*, D 18, KB. See Ahnlund 1945 p. 320.

[88] Saxo 14:28, p. 466.

Eriksson in his seizure of power or made an accommodation with him after his victory is not known, but he was obviously in his service. The link between Guttorm, Kol and Burislev provided by the Vreta donator list suggests strongly that they were allies, at least at the time the list was compiled. If Kol is not Kol of Sko, both he and Guttorm may have broken with Knut at the same time, after 1170, and probably before 1173, but this is not certain, nor do we know if the friendship suggested by the Vreta donator list still existed at this date. As Ahnlund observed, Värend was the same region to which Eskil fled during his conflict with Valdemar in the 1160s, and this may provide some explanation for the Pope's letter of 9 September, in which Guttorm is the only secular noble addressed. Guttorm may even have been appointed 'jarl of the svear and götar/gutar' by Kol when he made his bid for the kingship.[89]

A rebellion after Knut had seized power would explain why four of the five east Swedish king lists number Kol after Knut Eriksson but before Sverker Karlsson, king in 1196.[90] If these lists did not count Knut's regnal years from his coronation the rebellion could still have taken place before 1173—there seems no particular reason to place it as late as the 1180s, as Schück does. His reason, that the 1187–88 pagan attacks on Sigtuna and Almarestäk imply lack of coastal defence due to internal war in the Swedish realm, is very unconvincing. Sweden had a long coast that was difficult to defend against sudden attacks from the sea, hence the large number of barrages protecting inlets and rivermouths. The failure of a patrol fleet such as that provided by the *ledung* to encounter the enemy before they reached Sigtuna could be attributable to any number of factors, including incompetence on the part of a fleet commander or bad luck. If, however, Kol Johansson was Kol of Sko, his rebellion occurred after the granting of the *jarladöme* to Birger Brosa, since the two appear together in a witness list.

There remains the possibility that that there was a prolonged battle for the throne after Karl Sverkersson's death. This is the implication of Messenius's *Scondia Illustrata*, which records the deaths of

[89] See Chapter 4.1 for a further discussion of the title 'jarl of the svear and götar/gutar'.

[90] Five were assessed by Bolin as 'uppsvenska': see Bolin 1931 pp. 162–163. See also SRS 1.1, pp. 17–21.

Burislev and Kol in 1168 or 1169.[91] The B17 king list also says that Kol fell at Bjälbö, but not when, and Messenius's dates may be guesswork.[92] Although Burislev is listed after Kol in the *Västgötalagen* king list, he need not have died after him, and could even have rebelled before his brother. He is not listed in any other medieval source as a pretender to the throne, but this might be easily explained if his rebellion was very short, or if he supported Kol and survived him only for a short time.[93] They may both have died in the same battle, as Messenius claimed that Burislev continued the struggle after his brother died, but was killed in a second battle at Bjälbo. This reads suspiciously like a misunderstanding of a source which states that both Kol and Burislev died at Bjälbo, and that Burislev died after Kol.[94]

K.B. Westman argued that the Church supported the *Sverkerska ätten* in its struggle against Knut. The Church certainly owed a great deal to Sverker, and Stefan was appointed archbishop of Uppsala during the reign of his son Karl, but its position in the feud cannot be ascertained from the sources. Alexander III sent several letters in 1169 and 1171, demanding a series of reforms. The first is addressed to those within the jurisdiction of Uppsala church, emphasising that secular judiciary could not judge churchmen. Another concerned the resignation of Stenar, bishop of Linköping, who wished to return to the cloister. The churchmen and people of the diocese, under direction from Archbishop Eskil, the king and the *dux terrae* (Guttorm or Birger?), had chosen a certain Kol as his successor.[95] The churchmen and people were then requested to show Kol the

[91] A. Schück 1951 p. 212.

[92] The king list of Codex holmiensis B 17, referred to as the 'B17 King list'.

[93] His circumstances might have been similar, for instance, to those of Dafydd, brother of Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, the Welsh prince of Gwynnedd, who succeeded him as prince in rebellion, but survived only for a few months in 1283.

[94] MSI 2, p. 8. The revolt is also recorded in Books 12, p. 106, and 15, p. 28. In Book 2 the rebels are named Bugislaus and Karl and the revolt is recorded as having occurred in 1169. Book 15 conforms with this, the rebels named Bugislaus and Caroli, but in Book 12 the rebels are called Kool Johannis Ducus and Bugislav and the revolt is recorded as having taken place in 1168. Messenius was probably the source for C.F. Broocman, whose topographical work on Östergötland, dating from 1760, states that Kol and Burislev fought for the Swedish throne, and that Kol was killed at Bjalbö in 1169, and Burislev later. Despite suspicions concerning his dates, it should be noted that Messenius recorded other events that were not known from any other sources, but were subsequently proved correct during the last century, such as the foundation of Vreta by King Inge the Elder and Queen Helena.

[95] DS 57.

same respect that they had given to Gisle, former bishop.[96] Westman thought the king addressed was Kol, or possibly Burislev, and the *dux* Guttorm, the removal of Stenar their political plot, directed at installing a true successor to Gisle, who had been the ally of Sverker. All this is possible, if it is assumed that Stenar had thrown in his lot with Knut after Karl's death. It seems more likely, whoever the *dux* was, that Stenar was removed with the connivance of Knut, since he had been one of Karl Sverkersson's adherents. The request for respect to be shown to Kol suggests that not everyone in the Linköping region was happy with the change. Kol was obviously Knut's man, as they later cooperated in founding Byarum nunnery and in making donations to Nydala and Gudhem.[97] Westman also believed that Eskil's involvement in the resignation of Stenar showed that Stefan, the Archbishop of Uppsala appointed in Karl Sverkersson's reign, had fled the country. However, the 1171 letters are the result of Eskil's reports to Pope Alexander on the state of the Church in Sweden and the reason why he, as Archbishop of Lund, and not Stefan, Archbishop of Uppsala, was involved in Bishop Kol's appointment is probably that he was nearer to hand. Stefan was certainly abroad in 1169, in Italy, where he assisted in the canonisation of Knud Lavard, and he may still have been travelling, but the conclusion need not be that he had fled his homeland.

Some of Karl Sverkersson's adherents certainly did flee Sweden, as the *Västgötalagen* king list tells us that his infant son Sverker was carried to safety in Denmark. There he remained, later attending the court of the king, until he was recalled on the death of Knut in 1196.[98] Another who may have joined him was the *dux* Guttorm mentioned above. He had close connections to Denmark, as one of the genealogies of Sorø says his daughter Helene was married to Esbern Snare (his third wife), a member of the Danish Hvide family.[99] As noted above, Karl Sverkersson had formed a connection to the same family and Valdemar I through his marriage. This close connection between Danish, particularly Hvide, and *Sverkerska ätten* interests continued up to the death of Sverker in 1210. Conversely,

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[96] DS 61.
[97] DS 833 and DS 834.
[98] There exists a record of the *princeps sveorum* at the court in 1193: SRD 1, p. 283.
[99] Saxo, Commentary on Book 14, p. 807, n. 351.

Knut Eriksson and Birger Brosa were on poor terms with Valdemar, and gave refuge to several of his enemies, possibly in retaliation for Valdemar's harbouring of Sverker. These enemies included Karl and Knud Karlsen, who had plotted to murder Valdemar in the 1170s, and Harald Skreng, who attempted to take the place of Valdemar's son and successor, Knud, when he became king in 1182.[100] Birger and Knut also supported the Norwegian Sverre Sigurdson in his war against Jarl Erling Skakke, originally a protégé of Valdemar, who had secured his hold over Viken with the Danish king's help.

The *Sverkerska ätten* may also have favoured certain Danish royal saints, in particular Knud Magnussen, who had been an enemy of Valdemar before the latter emerged as victor in the internal struggles of Denmark in 1157.[101] The last section of yet another letter from Alexander III (which begins 'Audivimus'), addressed to the high king of the *svear* and *götar*, K., together with the bishops, clergy and people of *Gothia*, ends with the complaint that one who died while debauched and drunk is not fit to become a saint. This letter has provoked much argument, concerning the identity of K. (Kol or Knut?) and the unnamed unofficial saint. Westman came to the curious conclusion that the letter was addressed to Knut, who was by 1172 (when he thought the letter was sent) king in Götaland, but only to the people of *Gothia* because the rebels, under Kol or Burislev, were still in control of Svealand. Since Kol had earlier been in control of Linköping, according to his theory, the implication is that Knut had lost virtually the whole kingdom, *Suecia* and *Gothia*, in 1171. There is no evidence that Knut ever fled Sweden after Karl Sverkersson's death, or was ever in such a desperate situation; furthermore, the stronghold of the *Sverkerska ätten* must have been their homeland, Östergötland.[102] The possibility that Kol styled himself king of the *götar*, or Östergötland, cannot be ruled out, but the Pope's

[100] Saxo 14:54, p. 665, 16:1, pp. 602–05. Karl and Knud fled to Sweden after the failed assassination plot but later returned to Halland, when one died and the other was imprisoned. According to Saxo, they were related to Birger Brosa in some way. Harald Skreng (related to the Danish royal family) invaded Skåne with the help of Birger and Knut, where he received considerable support, but was then defeated and killed by troops sent by Archbishop Absalon.

[101] The two did make a rapprochement shortly before Knud was murdered by Valdemar's erstwhile ally Sven, at the *convivium* that had been planned to seal their peace agreement.

[102] The question of the *Audivimus* letter is considered in more detail in Chapter 11.

letter probably was addressed to Knut, and was most likely aimed at the suppression of the cult of Knud Magnussen, which had spread from Denmark to Sweden.[103]

The extent of Kol's revolt and the level of danger it represented to Knut Eriksson will never be known. There is no record of the rebellion in Danish sources, and therefore, it may be assumed, no reason for Valdemar I to intervene. The largest complexes of landholdings in Västergötland would most likely either have been neutral or supportive of Knut, since they belonged to the king of Denmark and the *Erikska ätten*, although, as noted earlier, there is a certain ambivalence to St Erik's dynasty in the *Västgötalagen* king list. It is possible that Erik's family gained many of its lands through his marriage to Christine. The attitude of the Svealand aristocracy is unknown, and may have been uncertain at the time. But the ultimate cause of Kol's failure may lie in Östergötland, where other powerful interests conflicted with his own.

It is in Knut Eriksson's reign that the *Folkungaätten* come to the fore in written sources. In Norwegian and Danish sources Knut's jarl, Birger Brosa, who presumably succeeded Guttorm, has a more important role than the king. This has led some scholars to conclude that he was more powerful than Knut, the power behind the throne, which may or may not be correct, but one reason for Birger's prominence in Norwegian sources is his close connection to Norway. At some time after he entered Knut's service as jarl Birger married Brigida, the daughter of former Norwegian king Harald Gille. The marriage brought prestige, but we have no knowledge of whether Birger acquired any lands through it. It was presumably because of the descent from a former king, as well as Birger's assistance, that Sverre Sigurdson made Filip, Birger's son, his jarl in Norway. Filip was killed at Oslo in 1200.[104] Nevertheless, Birger avoided becoming heavily embroiled in the battle for the Norwegian kingship.

The origins of the *Folkungaätten* are obscure, and the lands they may have owned in the mid-twelfth century can only be identified from those owned by their descendants. Although some of these lands

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[103] See Chapter 11:3.

[104] Sverris saga 160, pp. 170–71. The saga blames the death on Filip himself, suggesting that he ignored Sverre's advice and behaved rashly, but, since it was written under Sverre's auspices, this account is suspect. Subsequent page references to *Sverris saga* refer to the 1920 edition edited by Gustav Indrebø unless otherwise stated.

have alternative origins, it is clear that the *Folkungaätten* held lands in the old established regions of Östergötland, Södermanland (especially Rekarne) and Närke, while other lands in Småland may have been acquired during Birger Brosa's own lifetime, since it was in this period that previously sparsely inhabited districts of that region were colonised due to the production and export of bog iron. During Knut Eriksson's battle for the kingship the *Folkungaätten* almost certainly threw in their lot with him, enabling Birger Brosa and his allies to extend their power at the expense of the *Sverkerska ätten*. It is impossible to be certain how many former *Sverkerska ätt* lands subsequently passed to them; conceivably, the bulk of *Folkungaätten* landholdings were in Närke-Rekarne before Knut's victories. Rebel lands were certainly confiscated by victors and redistributed to their supporters in many internal struggles of this period, including those in Norway.[105] On the other hand, it should be noted that the majority of opponents were not deprived of their lands, as excessive punishment could provoke future rebellions: those that generally suffered were the most dangerous enemies, who had to be weakened.[106]

In addition to lands taken by force, some must have been acquired by the *Folkungaätten* through marriage—Birger's grandson Sune Folkesson married a princess of the Sverker line, Helena, daughter of Sverker I, and a granddaughter of Sverker's, Ingrid Ylva, married Magnus Minnesköld.[107] Nevertheless, the family must have owned some land in Östergötland before Knut Eriksson's reign, and Birger was sufficiently powerful to warrant special treatment by Knut in return for his help.

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[105] In one of his alleged pre-battle speeches Sverre explicitly promises his followers the possessions of their enemies should they win: see Sverris saga 35: p. 39.

[106] See Bagge 1996 pp. 25–26, and 1991 pp. 97–99. By and large Sverre Sigurdson was lenient with his defeated opponents, unless they were major threats to him. Almost a century earlier, Henry I of England was similarly lenient with his enemies in Normandy, with the exception of his brother Robert. Those who supported him (most of whom lived in western Normandy and Brittany) were rewarded with lands in Scotland, donated by Henry's protégé, David I. Within Scotland itself, many rebels were eliminated and their lands taken, but the wars against rebels there had more the character of frontier wars, conquests of peripheral regions. The French invasion of Languedoc in the early thirteenth century (the Albigensian Crusade) was also a conquest of a region that had fallen away from direct royal control, and many of the losses initially suffered by the native aristocracy were due to the religious nature of the struggle. It is notable that the excesses of the conquerors in this case did lead to rebellion, and excessive zeal in land-grabbing was at least as much a cause of this as excessive brutality.

[107] In addition it is possible that a sister of Ingrid's sister, Ulfhild, married Folke Jarl. Both were probably daughters of Sune Sik, son of Sverker the Elder.

Saxo refers to him as *præfectum Gothiæ* in the 1170s.[108] As noted with reference to Karl Sunesson, terms such as *dux* and *præfectum* were not used with any exactitude by medieval writers, and often meant different things in different lands, particularly when they were Latin translations of vernacular terms. For all that, Saxo's usage implies that Birger had considerable authority in Götaland at this time, either in his capacity as its greatest territorial magnate, or effectively governing either Östergötland or all of Götaland on the king's behalf. We may assume that Birger's brothers, Magnus Minnesköld and Karl Döve ('the deaf'), also benefited, but they may have been quite young in the early 1170s, especially Karl, who was still active in 1220, when he died in action. It has even been suggested that Magnus was at some time jarl or *lagman* of Östergötland, but for this there is no evidence other than that he is listed as having ratified privileges granted to the leper hospital in Skänninge.[109]

Our sources are too poor to make possible any certain statement on whether Knut Eriksson's reign marked a turning point. He had a long reign and died of natural causes, no mean achievement in twelfth-century Sweden. One possible change in his reign was the institution of a reformed *ledung* organisation and the associated position of 'jarl and the svear and götar (or gutar)'.[110] Knut is also the first Swedish king recorded as having made a treaty with a foreign magnate, Duke Heinrich of Saxony, although it cannot be said that this was a departure in foreign relations, as similar earlier agreements may have gone unrecorded, this itself being known only from reference in a later treaty of Birger Jarl.[111] In any case, according to Helmold, the agreement was the result of Heinrich's efforts to establish trade relations with the kingdoms and principalities around the Baltic, rather than an initiative of Knut's or Birger Brosa's.[112]

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[108] Saxo 14:54, p. 556.

[109] DS 4990. The document, from the reign of Magnus Eriksson, is a confirmation of concessions granted by Magnus Ladulås in 1280. In succession they had been confirmed by Birger Jarl, Bishop Karl Magnusson and Magnus Minnesköld. See Herman Schück 1959 p. 55, n. 60.

[110] This is discussed further in Chapters 4.1 and 6.1. In this work the term *svea-jarl* is used to refer to the 'dux sweorum et guttorum', with its associated rights and possibly lands (the *jarladöme*), as opposed to other jarls that may have administered given territories of Sweden.

[111] ST 1, 50.

[112] Jordan 1986 p. 71.

The one certain innovation of Knut's reign was the re-introduction of coinage to Sweden, none having been issued since the reign of Olof Skötkonung over 150 years earlier.[113] This has no obvious connection to economic change or the appearance of a market economy, and seems to have been the consequence of deliberate policy. Besides (ultimately) enabling taxation of the *bönder* in coin rather than produce and an increase in capital transactions, coins played an important part in propagating the king's image and his centrality to the order and functioning of the polity.[114] The immediate impetus for the setting up of mints was presumably the use of coinage by neighbouring kingdoms. The steady increase in the use of money in the Swedish kingdom has been traced by Henrik Klackenberg in his study of coin finds from Swedish churches.[115] Before 1250 different regions used different coinages. In the 1180s the mints of Västergötland produced coins on the Norwegian model, but Gotland, Östergötland, Öland and most of Småland used coins minted on Gotland, which was the economic and trading hub of the Baltic. One of Knut's mints was in Östra Aros (Uppsala, the other being in Gamla Lödöse), which represents an attempt at increasing influence in northern Svealand. Nevertheless, widespread use of coinage developed later in Svealand, where a combination of coins minted in Uppland and Gotland have been found, probably a reflection of its more fragmentary socio-economic structure and lack of central direction. Once the Folkung dynasty had become established, however, in the late thirteenth century, Svealand mints began to dominate.

It was possibly in Knut's reign that the *Erikska ätten* first established substantial landholdings in Svealand. As previously mentioned, one of Knut's actions was the transfer of Viby monastery to Säby (Julita) in Södermanland, and his acquisition of the land. His family may also have acquired land in north Svealand through confiscation, but this is mere speculation. What does seem clear is that some later *Erikska ätten*, particularly the branch of Knut's brother Filip, had close connections with the region. Whatever his successes once he had defeated Kol and Burislev, Knut did not have things all his own way. A letter was sent to the Swedish bishops by Pope Celestine III in 1193, in response to a request from Knut that his queen be

[113] See Chapter 11:5.
[114] See Chapter 11:5.
[115] Klackenberg 1992.

released from her vow of chastity (made at a time when she thought she was dying).[116] Knut had obviously claimed that he needed the assistance of her family to combat pagans, a sentiment designed to appeal to the Pope, but also, and perhaps more importantly for the king, to prevent slanderous accusations about his marriage. For this we should read attacks on the right of one of his sons to succeed him, since the same letter mentions that Knut had planned for this, allegedly with the agreement of the foremost men of Sweden. By this means Knut hoped to further secure the position of his dynasty, but it was not to be.

3.7. *Sverker the Younger c. 1195–1208*

After Knut Eriksson's death, probably in 1195, the son of his predecessor Karl Sverkersson became king. During his long exile in Denmark he had tried to build up his power base, apparently in any way that he could, including marriage into the *Folkungaätten*. At some time, possibly in the 1190s, Sverker married Ingegärd, daughter of Birger Brosa. Sverker is also known to have been married to Benedikte Ebbesdatter, daughter of Ebbe Sunesen, one of the Hvide kin-group, the most powerful in Denmark. Unfortunately it is not absolutely clear whether this marriage occurred before or after the marriage to Ingegärd, but on balance the evidence suggests that it was after.[117] According to Messenius, Sverker was chosen as king when Knut died on condition that Erik Knutsson succeeded him.[118] No source is given, but this might well have been part of an arrangement engineered by the *sveajarl*, Birger Brosa, perhaps before Knut's death. The marriage of Sverker and Ingegärd was probably part of the agreement. Birger may have tried to ensure the safety of Knut's sons, but he secured the succession for a rival family in order to make his daughter queen. Were he and his brothers among those who had undermined Knut's claims on his sons' behalf? It seems probable that they were among the group of powerful nobles referred to by Pope Celestine as managing the succession.[119]

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[116] ST 59, DS 825.
[117] See Appendix 1 for a discussion of this problem.
[118] MSI 2, p. 20.
[119] DS 825.

Knut's Eriksson's four sons were fostered by King Sverker. In one of his letters (to the bishops of Linköping and Skara), Pope Innocent III mentions that Sverker has told him of his fatherly love for the sons of Knut. It was not uncommon for the sons of noblemen to be fostered by another noble of a different family, and this may have been part of an agreement with Birger Brosa when, or before, he returned. If Sverker really did have such regard for Knut's sons the situation had clearly changed by 1205, when he killed three of them. Sverker may well have harboured a grudge, knowing the fate of his own father at Knut's hands, and in the best tradition of the Icelandic sagas, patiently waited for his chance to avenge this. If this were the case, he did not dare to act until after the death of Birger Brosa (1202). On the more practical side, the sons of Knut were potential threats to his throne, and one or more may even have plotted against him. We can only speculate on the reasons for the rift, and the flight of the eldest son, Erik, to Norway. Whether Erik received help from Jarl Håkon Galen is unknown, but he soon returned, entering Värmland and proceeding to Västergötland. There he probably hoped for more support, since it was his homeland, but he was defeated by Sverker at Älgarås late in 1205. He fled again, but his three brothers were killed. Exactly how they died, or even whether they were at the battle, is not certain, since the annals differ in their wording.

Sverker might have won the conflict there and then, but within three years managed to antagonise a sufficient number of nobles for them to drive him out of Sweden. The details of his political conflicts are not known, but the earliest and best extant manuscript of *Sverris saga* tells us that after Birger Brosa's death Sverker had appointed his own one-year old son as king.[120] Two of the other manuscripts have 'jarl' in place of 'king', and many Swedish scholars have concluded that this is the correct version, as it follows immediately after a statement of Birger Brosa's death and in the same sentence, and Sweden therefore needed a new jarl, not a new king.[121] Not everyone has accepted this. Adolf Schück, for instance, argued that the one-year old Johan could well have been designated Sverker's successor

[120] AM 327 4to, written in c. 1300. There are three other vellum manuscripts in *Flateyjarbók*, *Eirspennill* and *Skálholtsbók yngsta*, and a few fragments.

[121] Two of the surviving ms. are late thirteenth-century or early fourteenth-century, and the others from the late fourteenth and late fifteenth centuries. The argument that *jarl* was the original version (the original ms. is no longer extant) originated with Storm 1903, 89–90.

as king, in the same way that Magnus Ladulås's son Birger was eighty years later.[122] The two sentences together make sense if Messenius was right, and an agreement had been made that one of Knut's sons should succeed after his death, in which case Sverker felt able to defy Birger's wishes once he was dead.

Assuming that the text of AM 327 4to is correct, what problems might have ensued from such an act? The scathing comment of *Sverris saga* that the *svear* therefore had a 'trouserless king' implies that the move left Sweden open to ridicule, and it is possible that not everyone favoured the appointment for this reason. We have no way of knowing whether the appointment of Johan was conducted in a way that satisfied the nobility of the various regions of Sweden or not—if it was not, the reckoning was for some reason delayed for a further six years. Johan's elevation would certainly not have improved relations with the sons of Knut Eriksson, who may already have harboured a grudge, and this provides one possible reason for the open break that occurred by 1205. If Sverker had promised that one of them would succeed this would be an even greater betrayal. Its possible effect on the sons of the former jarl, Knut and Folke, is more difficult to gauge: they may also have seen it as a betrayal of their father's wishes, but on the other hand, Johan was their nephew, and they may have viewed the prospect of him succeeding Sverker favourably. There is no suggestion that any of the *Folkungaätten* supported Erik Knutsson's attempt to seize the kingship in 1205, although the sources for this consist only of a few terse annal entries that tell us little.

If the common Swedish interpretation of *Sverris saga* is accepted, that Sverker made his son Johan jarl, this would arguably have been a bigger political mistake: by so doing Sverker might well have antagonised the sons of Birger, who may already have regarded the *jarladöme* as theirs, undermining his position in the one *landskap* he might have counted on for support, Östergötland. In this case Birger's adult sons could hardly have failed to see the move as what it was; an attempt by Sverker to control the *jarladöme* himself. It is probable, however,

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[122] Adolf Schück 1956 p. 277. This version of the passage is included in the edition normally referred to in this work, which is taken from Cod. AM 327 4°. See Sverris saga, p. 195. The text reads *þa toku Suíar til konungs Jon son Sorqvis konungs var hann þa vetr-gamall. Hofdu þa Suíar konung broklausann.*

that the fall-out between Sverker and the *Folkungaätten* happened after 1205, and more than likely that other events contributed to this, of which we know nothing. At some stage during his reign, probably shortly before he was forced to flee in 1207 or 1208, Sverker's queen Ingegärd must have died.[123] Sverker's alliance with the *Folkungaätten* may already have been strained; if so, his wife's death must have weakened it further. It was probably shortly after this that he established the marriage link with the Hvide, when he took Benedikte as his wife. Sverker's own mother Christine came from the same family, and it was presumably to them that he had fled in 1267.[124] Possibly the marriage was an attempt to gather powerful allies against increasingly powerful enemies at home.

3.8. *Erik Knutsson 1208–16*

In 1207 or 1208 Sverker fled Sweden, and Erik Knutsson was chosen as king. Sverker's flight abroad and his dependence on foreign assistance to attempt the recovery of his kingship suggest that a very large number of the Swedish nobility had rejected him. He returned to Sweden either in or before 1208, with an army raised by Sune and Lars Ebbesen, brothers of his queen. Both Sune and his brother Lars were killed in the ensuing battle at Lena, almost certainly Kungslena, Västergötland.[125] On the opposing side Birger Brosa's son Knut died. He is called 'jarl' in the sources; if Sverker had not appointed his son jarl and Knut was not already jarl, Erik had made him his jarl in return for his support. It has been suggested that Birger's brother Magnus Minnesköld might also have died at Lena, but there is no clear evidence for this.[126] It may be assumed that

[123] See Appendix 1 for the evidence for this.

[124] Because of this, many scholars assumed that Benedikta was Sverker's first wife, but there are clear indications that she was his last. Her father supported Sverker in his war in 1208, and Benedikta, according to her daughter Helena, was buried in Alvastra monastery with former members of the *Sverkerska ätten*, rather than in the Hvide sepulchre at Sorø. See DS 302.

[125] The battle is recorded in the annals of 916–1263, 1208–1288, 1160–1336 and *Chronica Visbycensis*. The battle is recorded as a defeat for Sverker in the above annals, but for the Danish noble Sune Ebbesen in *Chronica Jutensis* (DMA, p. 285). In that chronicle, as in other Danish annals, it is dated as 1 February, whereas the Swedish annals date it to 15 August.

[126] Hermann Schück 1959 p. 245.

Magnus and his son Eskil supported King Erik, since Eskil was later in possession of the banner carried by Erik at the second battle with Sverker, at Gestilren in 1210. Sverker lost the battle of Lena, and again fled to Denmark. Knut was succeeded as jarl by his brother Folke. Erik Knutsson is virtually unknown in the sources before he became king, although he was in Norway during the winter of 1204–05 before the defeat at Älgerås and returned there afterwards.

After Sverker's flight to Denmark in 1208 an appeal was made by the Church for Erik to allow his adversary back. Valerius, archbishop of Uppsala, had fled with Sverker, and this no doubt lent weight to Sverker's appeal to the Pope. The bishops of Skara and Linköping weighed in alongside Valerius at the request of Innocent III.[127] Despite the threat of excommunication, Erik did not abdicate his throne. It must be assumed that his actions were supported by Folke Jarl and a significant number of other Swedish nobles—indeed, as in the case of Sverker and Erik's successor, Sverker's son Johan, Erik must have succeeded through their agency. This apparent alignment of secular nobility against Church has led a number of scholars to conclude that the *folkungar* (interpreted as the follower of Folke) were opposed to Church reform, and that this was one of the bases of their ideology in this and subsequent rebellions. Although the Church did take a pro-Sverker stance, the reasons for this and the motivations of Sverker's opponents are altogether obscure, given the lack of evidence. We may suspect that the influential Archbishop Andreas, another of the Hvide group, had a strong influence on the Pope. The other supposed plank of *folkung* ideology, opposition to strong kingship, is still less in evidence. No plans by Sverker to encroach on the traditional rights of the nobility are known of, apart from the selection of his son as either jarl or successor to the throne before his death, and opposition to this can as well be attributed to thwarted personal or family ambitions as to any ideology.

Sverker returned in 1210 with another army raised in Denmark. The armies met at Gestilren, whose site has never been identified, and once again casualties were heavy on both sides. Folke Jarl was killed, and on the opposing side Sverker himself. Only then was Erik crowned, in November 1210, in the first coronation of which we have any record in Sweden. Since Archbishop Valerius provided his

[127] ST 59.

services for the ceremony, Erik and his supporters had obviously made peace with the Church, or vice versa. The Church had little option but to accept the verdict of Gestilren. In 1216 Pope Innocent III formally accepted this also, but his letter did more than that—it confirmed Erik as king over pagan lands which had not yet been converted or conquered, giving him the power to install two bishops there who would come under the aegis of Uppsala. Whether a crusade was planned or not is unknown. Such a venture may have been requested by the Pope, or proposed by Erik as a means of securing papal approval. Either way, Erik died at Visingsö on 10 April 1216, probably before the letter arrived, as it was sent only six days earlier. His queen Rickiza gave birth to Erik, destined to be the next *Erikska ätten* king, after his death. Erik had married her in 1210, no doubt keenly aware of the threat from Denmark and the benefits of an alliance. She was a daughter of Valdemar I and Sofie, and sister to Valdemar II, and lived until 1220, when her body was returned to Ringsted. Erik himself, like his father, was buried in Varnhem.

3.9. *Johan Sverkersson 1216–22*

Only one male royal descendant could succeed Erik, Johan, son of Sverker Karlsson. He was only fifteen, and as such was placed in the hands of older, more experienced and possibly wiser men. More information on Johan's short reign has survived than on any of the other *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten* kings, although there are many unanswered questions. He was crowned in Linköping cathedral. In 1219 Linköping was probably superior to Uppsala in population and economic resources, but there may also have been political reasons for holding the coronation there, if there was opposition to the *Sverkerska ätten* in Svealand. Alongside Johan's mentor (*kansler*, in the sources), Bishop Karl of Linköping, son of Magnus Minneskold, were three other bishops, Robert of Västerås, Olof of Strängnäs and Bengt of Skara. In the 'outer ring' were Jarl Karl Döve, brother of Birger Brosa, and two more sons of Magnus Minneskold, the Västergötland *lagman* Eskil and Bengt. Karl Döve had presumably succeeded as jarl after the death of the last of Birger Brosa's sons, Folke.

The power of the *Folkungaätten* is evident in the list of those present at the coronation, and it is probable that they managed Johan's

succession. The authority they had achieved was the culmination of half a century of successful expansion of their lands—through either warfare and confiscation, or the marriage bed. Marriage to the women of the *Sverkerska ätten* arguably completed what the alliance to Knut Eriksson and the defeat of Karl Sverkersson, Kol and Burislev had begun.[128] Besides being a member of the *Sverkerska ätten* Johan Sverkersson was a grandson of Birger Brosa, who had engineered the marriage of his daughter Ingegärd to Sverker II. The fortunes of the family nevertheless suffered an eclipse, and its power may have waned temporarily, when an attempt was made to establish a base in Estonia in 1220. This was possibly a response to the letter of Innocent III, sent to the previous king, but also occurred in the context of conflicting interests in the Baltic, as Valdemar II of Denmark had invaded northern Estonia in 1219. The Swedes fortified a base at Lihula (*Leal*) on the west coast of Estonia, but on 8 August it was overrun by the natives and the garrison massacred. Both Karls, bishop and jarl, were among the dead. Bengt followed his brother as bishop of Linköping. Like his predecessor, Johan did not reign for long, and he died in 1222, the last of the *Sverkerska ätten* kings.

3.10. *Erik Eriksson's first reign and Knut Långe 1222–34*

The son of Erik Knutsson, eight years old at the time, was chosen to succeed Johan. The realm was actually governed by a council of nobles. Within a few years conflict erupted over the kingship again, this time between two branches of the *Erikska ätten*. In 1229 Knut Långe (Holmgersson) succeeded in defeating Erik Eriksson at *Olustra* and driving him out of Sweden.[129] The reasons for this rebellion are uncertain. Westman argued that an important cause of the rebellion was the intensified effort of the Church to install its own people in ecclesiastical offices, efforts that may not have been to the liking of the notoriously conservative and independent Svealand nobility, who wished to control their churches themselves. Those in favour of church reform were assumed to be Erik's mentors, most of the

[128] The last known marriage of this type was that of Sune Folkesson to Helena Sverkersdotter, Johan's sister.

[129] See Appendix 1 for problems concerning Knut Långe's identity. The site of the battle is uncertain: although Alvastra has been suggested, Ostra in the parish of Sundby, Södermanland seems a more likely alternative, nearer to Knut Holmgersson's landholdings in Uppland.

bishops, foremost among them Bengt of Skara and Bengt Magnusson. Bengt of Skara had certainly accepted papal demands for Church freedom from secular interference and royal taxation in 1224, but such demands had been made repeatedly before this, and would be made again.[130] Whether these bishops tried to impose them through the new king is not known. Westman's view is still widely held, and was accepted by Lönnroth, for whom the core 'programme' of the thirteenth-century *folkungar* was opposition to any extension in royal power, which, of course, went hand in hand with the extension of papal control over the Church in Sweden.[131] Rival factions had certainly taken a pro- and anti-Church stance in Sverre Sigurdson's later wars in Norway, reflected in the name given to his opponents, *baglar* ('croziers'). Westman and Lönnroth argued for a similar background to the Swedish rebellion of 1229.

As evidence for this supposed pro- and anti-Gregorian Church battle an exchange of letters between Bengt Magnusson and the Pope is cited, possibly responses to appeals to the Pope for help. Behind these, it was argued, might have been the threat from the 'anti-church' Knut Långe. A letter of Gregory IX (2 November 1232) mentions problems with payment of the *tionde*, but this had been an ongoing problem in Sweden. More interesting is a letter with the same date addressed to the bishop of Linköping, the abbot of Alvastra and a *prost* in Skänninge, referring to some nobles and other laymen in the diocese who wished to break up and dominate the Church.[132] This problem, however, clearly concerned a region of Östergötland, although disorder there may well have been encouraged by the weakening in the power of the Bjälbo branch of the *Folkungaätten* resulting from Knut Långe's usurpation. In January of the same year Bengt had received permission from Gregory to replace those appointed by laymen without the agreement of the Church, and such action may have provoked the problems to which the November letter refers.[133] Precisely what lay behind all this will never be known. Bengt probably needed more efficient prelates, canons, deans, archdeacons and deacons to administer his diocese; he may also have been taking action aimed at landowners who resented and opposed his family's power.

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[130] DS 227 and DS 228.
[131] Lönnroth 1959b p. 23.
[132] DS 264.
[133] DS 258.

The conflicts of 1229–35 can also be looked upon in terms of rivalry between alliances of family and friendship, which in this case had a regional pattern. As in Norway, such a conflict may have coincided with different attitudes to political and ecclesiastical reform, but it may be noted that even nowadays rival factions tend to adopt opposing political programmes for reasons other than belief, for instance, in order to gain support from ideologically-oriented groups. Like many churchmen who came from the ranks of the nobility, Bengt might have adopted the cause of reform of the Swedish Church, but it was also in his interest to obtain papal support against his enemies within Sweden. We do not have sufficient evidence to know whether he had adopted the reform programme of Popes since Gregory VII, or was merely paying lip service to it. In a letter concerning semi-independent Gotland, Bengt defended the traditional rights of the locals to appoint priests.[134] Still more mysterious is the attitude of the Archbishop of Uppsala during this period, a notable absentee from the coronations of Johan Sverkersson and Erik. Was he associated with recalcitrant secular nobility in northern Svealand?

The rebellion of Knut Långe represents the first clear evidence of a split within one of the three dominant kin-groups. There is no record of infighting within families during the twelfth century, although allowance must be made for the scarcity of evidence. In the thirteenth century, however, members of one kin-group opposed one another in major disputes and internal wars on more than one occasion. In Sweden it appears that the branch of the *Erikska ätten* represented by Knut Långe had installed itself in Uppland by the 1220s, but he was still listed as 'kanutus holmgeri filius cognatus et consilarius noster', witness to a judgement of Erik Eriksson made during the early part of his reign.[135]

Even less is known of the reign of Knut Långe than other twelfth- and early thirteenth-century rulers. In the words of *Erikskrönikan*;

> Sidhan wart Knutet til konung walder
> Ok liffde ther epter skaman alder
> Liffde ther epter skaman riidh[136]

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[134] DS 235.
[135] DS 216.
[136] *Then Knut was chosen as king/And thereafter lived for a few years/Lived thereafter a short time.*

The other evidence for Knut's short reign consists of a few KANVTVS coins and two letters, hardly sufficient to ascertain his character or policies.[137] Undoubtedly he had substantial support within Svealand. *Erikskrönikan* names Karl and Haralder as two of his allies, but they are otherwise unknown, except from later sources that appear to have derived this information from *Erikskrönikan*.[138] The *folkungar* may have had other reasons than fear of church reform for ousting Erik Eriksson, even such mundane ones as his unsuitability for kingship due to his youth and physical defects (lisping and limping), if he already had them. If, as Westman contended, the bishops and their friends came to dominate the circle of advisors around King Erik (which is by no means certain), is it not possible that Knut Långe and his friends resented their exclusion from the king's innermost counsel as much as any possible diminution in their rights to appoint priests or avoid payment of tithes? Bishop Bengt's influence and behaviour might have caused more resentment than his policies: we have no means of knowing. Knut himself was as generous to the Church as any other ruler, since he donated land for the foundation of St Maria church and Sko monastery.[139]

3.11. *Erik Eriksson's second reign 1234–50*

Knut died from unknown causes before or during 1234. Erik returned from exile in Denmark, apparently under peaceful circumstances. *Erikskrönikan* says there was another battle, but this may be assumption on the part of the author, as none is recorded in any other source. The government was effectively in the hands of the jarl, Ulf Fase, son of Karl Döve. During his period as jarl there is no further record of trouble. Little is known of Ulf, but it may be assumed that he was an able man, since he retained his position until his death and managed to prevent feuding between the various factions of nobility. His prestige and power is emphasised by issues of coinage

[137] Lagerqvist 1970 p. 54.

[138] See Ek p. 28. As in *Ek*, a Karl and a Harald are listed as allies of Knut Långe alongside Holmger, presumably Knut's son, in Ericus Olai's *Chronica Regni Gothorum*. Even more than *Ek*, Ericus's account gives the impression that Holmger rebelled and fled to Gästrikland immediately after his father's death, possibly confusing the events of 1234 and 1248. See EOC 1. 17, p. 74.

[139] DS 259.

in his name (VLF IARL or WLF DUX), minted in Svealand and Gotland.[140] It is interesting that the style of the two Ulf bracteates resembles that of Knut Långe's coins, with which they were found. Otherwise coins were only issued in the names of kings or archbishops at this time.

Ulf has traditionally been regarded as one of the 'folkunga party', but his role is ambiguous. Ulf is presumably the 'dominus Ulf' of a witness list in 1219, which associates him with Johan Sverkersson, Eskil Magnusson, *lagman* of Västergötland, and his brother Bengt.[141] He may have become jarl of the realm during the reign of the usurper Knut Långe, but he also held land at Svibo on Öland of Johan after Birger Brosa, which suggests that he was jarl in 1220, and probably succeeded his father.[142] He is first mentioned specifically as jarl in a document of 1231.[143] His cousin Magnus Broka, son of Knut Jarl, would have been another possible candidate for jarl. Magnus must have been associated with the defeated pro-Erik party, as he fled to Norway after *Olustra*, and remained there with his friend King Håkon.[144] Ulf is not named in *Erikskrönikan* as one of those present at the battle of *Olustra*, so his actions at the time of Erik Eriksson's overthrow must remain a mystery. He is recorded in *Hákonar saga* as being close to those who battled with Birger Magnusson after his death, but whether he was before *Olustra* cannot be known. The most that can be said is that he cannot have been opposed to the *folkungar*, as he remained jarl. However, if he was 'leader of the folkunga party' and already favoured Knut Långe's son Holmger, it may be asked why he assented to, or possibly instigated, the recall

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[140] Lagerqvist 1970 pp. 55, 78.
[141] DS 181.
[142] DS 185.
[143] DS 259.
[144] Hákonar saga 137, p. 191. The earliest extant redactions of the saga have been preserved in *Eirspennill*, *Codex Frisianus* and *Flateyjarbók*. The first two belong to the early fourteenth century, the last to the end of the same century. Mundt's edition is based on the incomplete manuscript preserved in Perg. 8 fol. (Stockholm) and the fragments AM 325 VIII, 4º and AM 304, 4º, which like the redactions of *Flateyjarbók* and *Skálholtsbók* derive from Iceland. Whether the *Eirspennill* and *Cod. Frisianus* ms were written by Icelanders is disputed. See the above edition of *Hákonar saga*, Inledning, pp. xi–xiii. Subsequent references refer to the same edition, unless otherwise stated: there are some differences between this reconstruction and that in Konunga sögur [ed. Guðni Jonsson], pp. 1–463, cited as Hákonar saga (ed. Jonsson). With reference to the Mundt edition, see also the supplement, Rettelser til Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar etter Sth. 8 fol., AM 325 VIII, 4º og AM 304, 4º, 1982.

of Erik Eriksson in 1235, after Knut Långe's death. Holmger was probably a minor at this time, and his succession would have left the government of Sweden largely in the hands of the jarl. It is most likely that Ulf was trying to achieve some stability in Sweden, and continued to follow this policy throughout his life. He cannot have been a deadly enemy of Birger Magnusson, or Birger would not have achieved his increasingly influential position at court unchallenged, let alone married Erik Eriksson's sister Ingeborg. Like Knut Eriksson before him, Ulf must have known that he needed cooperation from powerful nobility in Östergötland to unite the realm and maintain peace.

By the time of Erik Eriksson's return the descendants of Birger Brosa were more powerful than ever, having increased their landholdings through Sune Folkesson's marriage to Helena, daughter of Sverker II, and possibly through confiscations as a result of defeats suffered by the *Sverkerska ätten* in 1208 and 1210.[145] About ten years after his return King Erik married Katarina, daughter of Sune Folkesson, and we may assume from this that Sune had considerable influence at Erik's court. The wedding took place at Förisängen, near Uppsala.[146] There is no suggestion that Sune had any dispute with Birger Magnusson, but he died in 1247, shortly before the death of Ulf Jarl and the outbreak of the second rebellion against Erik Eriksson. Whether he would have represented an obstacle to any of Birger Magnusson's subsequent actions will never be known. Katarina's younger sister Benedikta was probably in Vreta nunnery by 1247, as she had promised her mother on her deathbed in 1240. Her kidnap from there is remembered in a *folkvisa* (ballad/poem) of uncertain date, known as the 'Vreta klosterrov', which appears to have

[145] According to a later medieval *folkvisa*, Sune had secured his bride ('Elin') by dubious means, a kidnap from Vreta nunnery, but there is no better documentary evidence to corroborate the tale, as there is with a second *Vreta klosterrov* ballad, that of the abduction of Benedikta, Helena's daughter. The ballad of Helena's abduction contains several known errors; for instance, Elin's father is named as Magnus. Many scholars argue that abduction (the seizing of a woman without her parents' consent) was an acceptable, even honourable, activity in pre-Christian Europe. Only in the eleventh and twelfth centuries did the Church make significant progress in changing attitudes in western Europe, and Sweden was only recently Christianised in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See, for instance, Duby 1985 pp. 32–42, 171, 237–38.

[146] ASMÆ, *Annales 1208–1288* (1244) p. 260 and *Annales 1160–1336* (1243) p. 269. The first gives no place and only Erik's name.

more historical foundation than the ballad of Elin (Helena). The perpetrator of this act was Lars Petersson, who then fled to Norway.[147] In a document of 1244 Lars is named as Östergötland's *lagman*, but by 1247 he had been replaced by Magnus Bengtsson, Magnus Minneskölds grandson.[148] Lars profited little from his deed; he died in Norway, and Benedikta returned to Sweden, where she was named in her sister Katarina's testament.

Bishop Bengt Magnusson died in 1237, and was succeeded by Lars (1237–58). Bengt's last years seem to have been productive, at least for the Church in his diocese. After his death a new and ambitious son of Magnus Minneskköld emerged in the figure of Birger. Since he did not die until 1266, he must have been younger than Magnus's sons Eskil, Bengt and Karl by some years, and was probably still young when Knut Långe seized power. After Erik Eriksson's restoration he began to exert his influence. It is difficult to believe that he could have done this, and certainly not married Erik's sister Ingeborg, without Ulf Jarl's assent. The date of this marriage is unknown, but was probably in the late 1230s. It is possible that Birger's power in southern Sweden was recognised by Erik (presumably with Ulf's agreement) through the bestowal of the title of *dux* of Östergötland: if so, this might have been a favourable time to do it.[149]

What Birger Magnusson did before Erik's restoration is a mystery, but he subsequently appears in various guises in the king's service, for instance, as representative in diplomatic discussions with King Håkon in 1241, and as mediator of disputes between Nydala and the local populace.[150] This is the same period in which many suggest that Birger led a 'crusade' to Finland to suppress a pagan reaction to Christianisation. Because *Erikskrönikan* is the only source for this expedition, the whole issue has been surrounded by controversy, even the date being uncertain. The commonly accepted alternative is 1249, which seems less likely, as Birger was then establishing his power as jarl, may already have known that King Erik was

[147] *Vreta klosterrov* treats this as a tragedy, whereas a *visa* of Lars and Benedikta suggests that she was willing.

[148] ASMÆ, *Annales 1208–1288* (1244) p. 260, *Annales 826–1415* (1245) p. 382.

[149] See Chapter 4.

[150] Hákonar saga 243, p. 136, and, as one example in which Birger appears as the king's *ombud*, DS 294.

approaching death, and still had powerful potential enemies in Sweden.[151]

No doubt Birger Magnusson's marriage increased his authority at Erik's court, but more important, it meant that their son Valdemar could trace his descent directly from St Erik and his royal line. Probably Birger was already thinking of the possibility of his son becoming king after Erik's death. Erik and Katarina were almost certainly childless, since no child has been recorded. Birger could have had several motives. Among them was no doubt ambition, but self-preservation might have been another. The alternative succession to the kingship was the family of Knut Långe, who could also claim descent from St Erik. If this came about, Birger would have suffered a diminution of his power at the very least. He and Knut's sons were already rivals before Ulf Jarl's death, probably enemies, and only the continued reign of Erik and the authority of his jarl prevented conflict. By the time of Erik's death in 1250 Birger had manoeuvred himself into a powerful position. Unlike his opponents, he had resources and authority outside northern Svealand, both of which were increased by his appointment as jarl of Sweden in 1248.[152] Holmger and Filip cannot have had such extensive landholdings as Birger, nor such a large network of allies. Their influence was probably restricted to Uppland and neighbouring areas.

The exact course of events in 1247–48 is uncertain. It is not impossible that Birger Magnusson had effective power before Ulf died. The papal legate Cardinal William of Sabina visited Sweden late in 1247 and the first provincial council took place in Skänninge, Östergötland.[153] At the meeting were Archbishop Jarler and the bishops of Skara, Linköping, Strängnäs, Västerås and Växjö, the *lagman* of Östergötland and several other secular nobles, among them one named as *dux terrae*. Unfortunately he is not named, but it seems probable that it was Birger.[154] A rebellion against King Erik (not

[151] The issue of Sweden's takeover of Finland is discussed at more length in Chapter 11.

[152] Ulf's death is related in *Hákonar saga* and several Annals, the earliest being *Annales 1208–1288* (ASMÆ, p. 260). See Hákonar saga 262, p. 148.

[153] DS 347–60.

[154] DS 359. Described as *dux per quem fere totaliter regitur terra illa*. Whether this means that Birger was the dominant power in Östergötland, or was a jarl there with authority delegated by the king, or was already *dux sveorum et guttorum* cannot be certain—this is discussed further in Chapter 4.

mentioned by William), led by Holmger Knutsson, had just erupted. The rebellion was very likely connected with the imminent or actual succession of Birger Magnusson to the position of *sveajarl*. If Birger was known to favour increased royal administration or taxation in Uppland this would have added to the threat. If Holmger was not already aware of it, the danger to any aspirations of gaining the kingship he may have held must have been clear. Supporting him was Filip Larsson and presumably other unnamed nobles. They were defeated at Sparrsätra (near Enköping). Holmger fled to Gästrikland and Filip to Norway.

Erikskrönikan and several annals tell of Holmger's capture, and the annals say that he was beheaded. This was a common punishment for rebellion against the crown, but all his lands were also confiscated, a course of action beyond any stipulated in the later law codes. Holmger's wife was left with nothing. Filip Larsson also lost his lands and fled to Norway, where his grandfather had been jarl. Holmger was buried in Sko nunnery, originally a Dominican monastery founded in the 1230s, possibly by his father Knut Långe.[155] Tales of miracles at his grave circulated, and he became a local saint. According to *Annales 1208–1288*, Holmger and his allies were not the only sufferers, as the entry for 1247 states that the *rustici* of Uppland lost their liberty in the battle at Sparsätra, and the *spannamale*, *skeppvist* and many (other) burdens were imposed on them.[156] All medieval annals and chronicles had a tendency to attribute past changes that may have been gradual to one dramatic moment, but the failure of this rebellion would certainly have provided the opportunity to introduce new taxes, even if the prospect of their introduction had not been one of its causes.

For historians there has been some difficulty in reconciling William of Sabina's reference to a *dux* with authority in Götaland in 1247, when disorder (assumed to be connected with the rebellion) had broken out, with sources that name 1248 as the year of the *sveajarl* Ulf's death. In this case the revolt must have occurred before he died.[157] With the incomplete evidence at our disposal all plausible reasons

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[155] Ek p. 29.

[156] ASMÆ, *Annales 1208–1288*, p. 260: . . . *et eodem anno communitas rusticorum Vplandie Sparsatrum amisit victoriam libertatis sue, et inposite sunt eis spannale et skypuiste et honera plura.*

[157] See Chapter 4:1.

for Holmger's rebellion involve a threat from Birger, and either his actual or his imminent succession as *sveajarl*. If it is assumed that William's *dux* was the *sveajarl* and that this was Birger, and the year of Ulf's death was indeed 1248, the *jarladöme* was either handed over to Birger, or taken by him. It seems improbable that Ulf lost the *jarladöme* because he was involved in the rebellion himself, since even the meagre sources we possess would surely have mentioned this. Gallén suggested that the fighting mentioned by William of Sabina, and his successful mediation, was actually between the factions of Birger Magnusson and Ulf Jarl, assumed to be the *folkunga* leader on the basis of the saga's claim that he was a friend to them.[158] The scenario is based on several other premises: that the *dux* mentioned by William was the jarl, that there was only one jarl in Sweden, and that therefore Ulf had already lost the *jarladöme*, that the battle of Sparrsätra had already occurred, and that *Hákonar saga* is mistaken in thinking that Ulf was still jarl when he died. What Ulf might have been doing while his supposed *folkunga* followers were being crushed by Birger is unclear. Presumably the inference is also that Birger, flushed with victory over Holmger, persuaded Erik Eriksson to depose Ulf and appoint him *riksjarl* in his place. It is also possible that Ulf did not lead the *folkungar*, but remained aloof from events during Holmger's rebellion, allowed Birger and his allies to crush the rebels, and Birger then used his new power to oust Ulf. It is difficult to reconcile the Ulf of either of these scenarios with the man who had maintained his position, apparently without conflict, for twelve years and was named in *Hákonar saga* as still 'the most powerful man in Sweden' in 1247, unless he had suddenly succumbed to dementia at the end of the year. It seems more likely that Ulf was incapacitated by illness and Birger took, or was given, his position before he died. There is no indication of this in *Hákonar saga*, in which mention of his death follows immediately after the relation of his journey to Västergötland with Birger, but the saga is reticent on Swedish events that did not affect Håkon directly.[159] It is also entirely possible that Ulf was still *sveajarl* but that Birger was simultaneously jarl of Östergötland, or of the *götar*. Whether Ulf was still active or not, the naming of Birger as his successor as *sveajarl* would

[158] Gallén 1946 p. 64.
[159] Hákonar saga 262, p. 148.

have given Holmger good reason for rebellion, in which case both Ulf and Birger could have supported Erik when the rebellion broke out.

Both Ulf's son Karl and his uncle and namesake, the brother of Ulf, accompanied Birger Jarl on one of his expeditions to meet the Norwegian King Håkon IV in 1253, which suggests that any differences between Ulf's close relatives and Birger had been settled by then, and that Ulf Fase's last days did not involve his overthrow by Birger.[160] Alongside Jarler, Archbishop of Uppsala and Lars, Bishop of Skara, Karl Ulfsson had also accompanied Birger Jarl's daughter Rikissa on her journey to wed Håkon the Younger, son of Håkon IV and co-ruler, in 1251. However, Karl Ulfsson may initially have been opposed to Birger's appointment as Jarl of the *Svear*, not least because he might have expected to succeed his father, as others had done in the past. He is almost certainly to be identified with the *junker* Karl of *Erikskrönikan*, who, according to the poet, set himself up in opposition to Birger, but was not present at the rebel defeat of Herrevadsbro in 1251.[161] It is difficult to believe that Karl was chosen by Birger to accompany Rikissa, the task of a trusted man, in the same year that they were in dispute. The poet is either unsure of or uninterested in the precise chronology of these events, and the settling of differences related in the rhyme chronicle probably occurred before the 1251 rebellion. The tale continues with Karl going abroad to become a knight of the Teutonic Order, which happened some years later. He died fighting the Lithuanians in 1260, an event recorded elsewhere, and his testament, in which he left property to the Order, has also survived.[162] Presumably, as his father had done, Karl had some sympathy with the rebel Knutssons and their allies, but avoided an open break with Birger.

A further interesting puzzle is the part played in the 1247–48 revolt by Holmger's brother Filip and the other Svealand nobility involved in the 1251 revolt. Filip was not disinherited until after the second revolt, and the 1247–48 rebellion is not mentioned in Icelandic-Norwegian sources, although *Hákonar saga* does say that Birger took Holmger's life.[163] *Annales 1160–1336* similarly records the execution of Holmger but no detail of his rebellion, whereas Filip's rebellion

[160] Hákonar saga 280, p. 158.
[161] Ek p. 35: *Junker Karl war ekke thär* (at *Herwadzbro*).
[162] Ek pp. 36–37.
[163] Hákonar saga 262, p. 148.

(which it dates to 1252) is recorded in more detail.[164] It is possible that Filip Knutsson and some or all of his allies from 1251 did support Holmger and Filip Larsson, but were pardoned in 1248, even if they lost some possessions as fines. This does not tie in with the general impression of Birger Jarl's ruthlessness, but our sources record only the fate of a few leaders who lost everything. It should also be remembered that Birger needed to listen to the opinions of his own allies, whose names and actions have been lost to us. It is also possible that Filip and others fled after 1248, and returned with some of the foreign troops recorded as being involved in the 1251 rebellion. Alternatively, Holmger's revolt may have been hastily organised and ill conceived, and thereby caused potential allies to hold off. If Ulf was still jarl this might have been another factor in persuading some to wait. The situation must nevertheless have been serious if there was turmoil in Östergötland, but whether the cardinal saw the evidence of the robbery and murder he referred to, or simply recorded what he heard from the mouths of others, cannot be known.[165] Periods when order broke down as a result of ineffectual or disputed rule invariably provided opportunities for brigandage and the settling of personal grievances between neighbours.

Although blood links were very important in the formation of medieval alliances, proliferation of a family's members meant that some of its branches became increasingly distant from others, geographically and figuratively, and often, as a result, politically, the most spectacular example in this period being the princely Russian Rurikid family. Like the *Folkungaätten* after 1251, this had no rivals for the rulership from other families. Although some have chosen to see the *Folkungaätten* as long-term supporters of the Church and a strong kingship, this is a simplistic and retrospective view based on what Birger Jarl is assumed to have achieved after 1248.[166] The extent to which the *folkungar*, so named in *Erikskonikan* and the *Västgötalagen* king list, represented a faction with political interests or a faction with kinship-ties has been much debated.[167] If the name

[164] On the other hand, *Annales 1208–1288* records details of the first rebellion and the execution of Holmger, but only the execution of Filip and Knut in the second rebellion, dated to 1251: ASMÆ, p. 260.

[165] DS 359.

[166] This view can be seen at its most simplistic in Svennewall 1996 pp. 186–201.

[167] Ek p. 28.

did derive from Folke Jarl, the rebel of 1210 and son of Birger Brosa, there is no evidence that there was any division within the *Folkungaätten* at that time. By comparison with the *Erikska ätten*, the *Folkungaätten's* members multiplied. It has been shown that many of those who took part in successive *folkungar* rebellions after 1247 were descended from Birger Brosa. They found themselves in opposition to the descendants of Birger's brother Magnus Minnesköld.

Divisions within the kin-group become evident in the sources after Birger Magnusson achieved a dominant position at Erik's court in the 1240s. Filip Larsson, Holmger Knutsson's ally in 1248, was grandson to Birger Brosa's son Filip, King Sverre's jarl. Like Knut Långe before him, Filip Larsson seems to have become closely associated with the interests of the conservative *svear*. Birger Magnusson also had relatives with close connections to Norway who did not necessarily share his interests. One of them was Knut Magnusson, son of Magnus Broka.[168] Magnus had been a close associate of Håkon, and probably held lands in Värmland. So too did Knut Kristinasson, son of Håkon Galen and hence descendant of King Harald Gille, and probably also descendant of St Erik through Nils Blaka's wife Katarina, his grandmother. Birger Magnusson's half-brother Eskil *Lagman* had also been Knut's father-in-law. Knut followed in his father's footsteps by becoming Norwegian jarl in 1240, when Håkon IV was crowned king. *Hákonar saga* tells us that both Knut Kristinasson and Knut Magnusson were opponents of Birger, and to him they must have been dangerous opponents, because of their influence in Norway. The saga takes no obvious position on who should have been chosen as Swedish king in 1250, but Knut Magnusson is listed as one of those who had a claim to the crown, supposedly through his descent from Knut Eriksson, alongside Filip Knutsson and Valdemar Birgersson.[169] Other sources say Magnus was a son of Birger Brosa and married a daughter or granddaughter of Knut, which might have given his son Knut a claim, but not Magnus himself. The claim of Filip, as a son of former king Knut Långe, is more certain, but the saga passage says most men thought the jarl's (Birger's) son had

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[168] Magnus Broka was son of Sigrid and Knut Jarl, son of Birger Brosa. His sister Cecilia is known to have been alive in 1247, and was married to one Filip Birgersson, but his descent is unknown. Nor is the situation of either of them known at the time of the 1247–48 and 1251 revolts. However, their sons Johan and Birger were involved in later rebellions and were therefore called *folkungar*.

[169] Hákonar saga (ed. Mundt), 269, p. 152; (ed. Jonsson), 236, p. 352.

the best claim because Birger's wife Ingeborg inherited from her brother Erik Eriksson, and the kingship should therefore have passed to their son.[170]

'People had different opinions about these deeds, since they were either friendly or hostile to the jarl'; so *Hákonar saga* sums up the reaction to Birger Jarl's actions before 1251.[171] Regrettably, this is almost the extent of our knowledge of the rival factions, and the level of opposition to Birger Jarl is thus difficult to gauge. Erik Eriksson died in 1250, and was succeeded by Birger's son Valdemar. The account given in *Erikskrönikan* of a discussion between Birger Jarl and an otherwise unknown Joar Blå, in which the latter explains his decision to push thorugh the election of Valdemar rather than Birger himself on the grounds that Birger was too old, can be dismissed as fiction, since Birger himself had no claim to descent from any king and there is no other evidence that he contemplated taking the kingship for himself. Like many of his predecessors, Valdemar was not crowned in Uppsala, but in Linköping. Birger Jarl must have secured the support of many of the Swedish nobility for the election of his son in 1250, and most of these probably remained his allies in 1251. According to *Hákonar saga*, the majority followed Birger's wish because he had the most 'landráð', presumably referring to his possession of the *jarladöme* and possibly also to his private resources.

There has been some debate as to whether Birger was actually present at the election of Valdemar, as *Erikskrönikan* says he was absent. In its sequence of events, the election occurs after King Erik's recovery of the kingdom, supposedly as a result of the battle of Sparrsätra and Birger Magnusson' marriage to Ingeborg. Erik then chooses Birger to lead an expedition to Christianise Tavastia. Birger is absent when Erik dies, and, on receiving word of his death, returns to find that Joar Blå is managing the election of his son, and proceeds to remonstrate with Joar for not choosing him. For many years it was assumed that Birger must have been in Finland when messengers were sent to him with news of Erik's death, which would date this so-called 'second crusade' to 1249. However, it is clear that

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[170] Several of the medieval Scandinavian law codes state that sister inherited from brother.

[171] Hákonar saga 274, p. 154, *Hôfðo þeir mikinn her ok foruz i motí*; (ed. Jonsson), 240, pp. 356–57, *Höfðu þá hvárirtveggju her mikinn ok fórust í mót.*

events described in *Erikskrönikan* do not always follow in chronological order, and that elsewhere the author manipulated his sources to produce the narrative he wanted. In 1246 Gallén questioned the 1249 dating for the 'crusade', suggesting that the most likely date for it would be 1238–39, following the 1237 appeal for one to be preached in Sweden by Pope Gregory IX. He pointed out that *Håkonar saga* says Birger was negotiating with Håkon IV of Norway in Västergötland in the spring of 1249. This does not rule out all possibility of an expedition to Finland later in the year, although it does appear that the fleet levy for an expedition in the same year was normally summoned at Candlemass.[172] More telling is the statement of *Hákonar saga* that the election of Valdemar in the following year followed Birger's arrival at the scene—there is even the implication that this swung the vote.[173] Furthermore, only eight days elapsed between Erik's death and Valdemar's election, which would not have allowed time for the news to reach Finland and for Birger to make his way back. John Lind suggests that *Erikskrönikan* deliberately manipulated chronology in order that Birger would be absolved of culpability in the removal of other contenders for the kingship and manipulation of the election, which instead appears as a free choice of the electors. This gives added legitimacy to the dynasty of Magnus Eriksson, great-grandson of Birger.

There is no doubt that the *Erikskrönikan* author was attempting to bolster the ruling dynasty of his time (in 1320–30), and may well have been commissioned to do just this.[174] Its author was not averse to recording suspect actions committed by its members, which included Birger Jarl's treachery at Herravadsbro (see below), but a suggestion that the dynasty's right to rule was dubious would have been another matter. As a source for this event *Håkonar saga* is to be preferred to *Erikskrönikan*. Whatever reservations one may have about Sturla Þorðarson's interpretation of some of Håkon's own actions and motives and those of his enemies, he had little reason to fabricate his own version of events in Sweden. The saga is more nearly contemporary,

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[172] See Chapter 7:3. According to *Erikskrönikan*, the fleet that Tyrgils Knutsson took to the Gulf of Finland at the end of the century was summoned at Candlemass.

[173] Hákonar saga 269, p. 152.

[174] Nordstrandh 1990 pp. 9–31. On the methods of *Erikskrönikan's* author and its style of composition, see also Pipping 1950, and for a more recent view, Vilhelmsdotter 1999.

presents a more coherent narrative and is less likely to distort events there than *Erikskrönikan*. *Erikskrönikan's* tale of Joar Blå and Birger Jarl is not believable, and the battle of Sparrsätra occurred thirteen years after Erik's return, not, as the rhyme chronicle implies, in 1234. The author of *Erikskrönikan* undoubtedly drew on sources which are now lost to us, perhaps oral tradition, but he may also have constructed his own version of events where these were lacking. As Nordstrandh pointed out, he actually states his intention to embellish fact in the name of entertainment in the prologue to the work.[175]

Birger's greater authority and power obtained the kingship for his son. Like Junker Karl in *Erikskrönikan*, many Svealand nobles may nevertheless have had doubts about his intentions, although they did not rebel against him.[176] The revolt of 1251 appears to have been localised north of Mälaren, but was probably more serious than Holmger's. Both *Hákonar saga* and *Erikskrönikan* mention that the rebels had foreign assistance, indicating some planning for the revolt. The saga says Filip (presumably the Filip Petersson of *Annales 1160–1336*) and Filip Knutsson tried to persuade King Håkon to support them and then went to raise men in 'Vindland' (Vendland, north-east Germany), where they obtained the help of Germans and possibly Slavs also.[177] *Erikskrönikan* claims that the rebels had support from

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[175] Nordstrandh 1990 p. 10. A number of historians, particularly in Finland, have been unwilling to accept Gallén's arguments. Maunu Jokipii, for instance, took Beckman's argument that *Erikskrönikan* may have been commissioned by Mats Ketilmundsson as proof of this, further declared that Beckman 'had demonstrated (*osoittanut*)' that Mats was descended directly from Birger Jarl, and then concluded from this that the author of *Erikskrönikan* had access to family tradition. Even if the assumptions about the commission and the genealogy were correct (and Beckman himself admitted that they were hypotheses), this tradition would still have passed through several hands and would not be as reliable as the version of events in *Hákonar saga*. None of those who refuse to accept the arguments of Gallén have been able to refute his arguments, or those of scholars who have shown that Ek's narrative is sometimes unreliable and did not relate events chronologically. See Jokipii 1965 pp. 12–49, and 2000 pp. 250, 258–262, which repeats the same arguments. For the basis of his arguments on Mats Kettilmundson's ancestry, see B. Beckman 1954 pp. 342–402.

[176] Ek pp. 35–36.

[177] Hákonar saga (ed. Mundt) 153, p. 272; (ed. Jónsson) 238, p. 355. The latter reads:

> *Hákon konungr fór um sumarit ór Þrándheimi suðr til björgynar ok sat þar. Herra Knútr, son Magnúss bróka, var með konunginum. Þá kom austan ór Víkinni til móts við konung herra Philippus ok herra Philippus, son Knúts langa. Beiddu þeir Hákon konung, at hann skyldi fá þeim styrk til þess, at þeir mætti fá þat ríki, er þeir þottust vera til komnir.n konungr vildi eigi nokkurn styrk fá þeim, því at þat váru einkamál þeirra Birgis jarls, at hvárgi skyldi*

Danes, Norwegians and Germans.[178] Heading the chronicle's list of rebel contingents are the *uplenszska*, a term which the author unfortunately uses in other parts of the poem to refer to *upplänningar*, northern Swedes, or any Swedes. The rebels were defeated at Herrevadsbro in Västmanland, and several leading men suffered the same fate as Holmger. Precisely who they were is not entirely clear, as different people are named in various annals. According to one redaction of *Hákonar saga* both Filips (presumably the same two who had earlier visited Håkon), Knut Magnusson and a number of Germans were taken and executed. *Annales 1160–1336* also lists Filip Knutsson and Filip Petersson as killed, but alongside them Knut's father Magnus Broka.[179]

It appears that Birger Jarl's network of foreign connections served him well during the early years of Valdemar's kingship. He may have received help from Lübeck, in return for privileges granted in two diplomatic letters.[180] Lübeckers were freed from tolls and tribute, but consented to live under Swedish laws while in Sweden, and to assist in combating piracy. An alternative interpretation of this agreement places it after the 1251 rebellion, suggesting that Lübeckers (and/or other north German ports) might have been among those who supported the rebels, as Birger's actions in blocking the route into the Mälar waterway threatened their trade with increased tolls and perhaps agreements with individual *svear* nobles. If this was the case, Lübeck wasted little time in coming to terms with the victor after the rebellion. Alternatively, the Germans may have simply been groups of mercenaries.

If Norwegians were employed by the rebels, they may have been freebooters or troops provided by enemies of Birger, but their support

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efla annars óvini. Eftir þetta fara herrarnir í brott ok first suðr til Vindlands ok efldust þaðan at liði, bæði Þýðverskum ok Vindum, ok fóru síðan til Sviaríkis ok reistu ófrið móti Birgi jarli.

The Mundt edition says virtually the same, but ends . . . *ok suðr til vindlandz ok efldoz þaðan at liði ok reistu ufrið moti birgi jarli*; there is no mention of raising 'both Germans and Slavs'.

[178] Ek p. 35.

[179] Hákonar saga (ed. Jónsson) 240, p. 358. Mundt's edition simply says that 'the lords' (*herrarnir*) were taken by Birger Jarl and that they and many others, especially Germans, were executed; Hákonar saga 274, p. 154. See also ASMÆ, *Annales 1208–1288* p. 260, *Annales 1160–1336* p. 269, and later annals. *1208–1288* lists Filip and Knut, 'sons of Katarina, daughter of Erik II' as the dead. See Appendix 1, A.1.4 for a discussion of the genealogical problems related to this.

[180] DS 390, DS 391.

cannot have been sanctioned by King Håkon. Håkon and Birger Jarl had met in 1249.[181] The original cause of the meeting appears to have been another emissary from the Swedes in 1247 demanding compensation for damage done by Håkon in Värmland in 1225, which he claimed was in retaliation for support given to his Norwegian enemies.[182] However, this claim was soon dropped and an alliance made, cemented by the marriage between Håkon's son and Rikissa, Birger's daughter.[183] The alliance seems to have functioned more as a non-aggression pact than an agreement for combined action, since, despite Sturla's emphasis on the friendliness of subsequent meetings,[184] there is no evidence that Håkon intervened on behalf of Birger Jarl, while Birger gave little active support to Håkon in his wars with Denmark. Probably both Håkon and Birger were satisfied with a 'secure flank'. Nevertheless, the agreement brought almost immediate fruits for Birger, since Håkon refused an appeal for help from his enemies, Filip and Filip Knutsson. Knut Magnusson was with Håkon when they appeared at his court; the wording of the text implies that it was only the two Filips who left empty-handed to find what troops they could and raise rebellion against Birger Jarl and Valdemar, but Knut was also captured at Herravadsbro, so he may have gone with them.[185]

It is likely that the rebels of 1247–48 or 1251 issued coins, for which three coins inscribed REX VPSALIE provide possible evidence.[186] They do not resemble contemporary coins of Erik Eriksson or Valdemar Birgersson closely. If they were issued by the rebels this would indicate that their aims extended beyond an attempt to halt the encroachment of royal administration. The leaders of the second rising arrived with foreign mercenaries, and either knew or hoped that their numbers would be swelled by local supporters. Possible causes of resentment towards Birger Jarl might have been

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[181] Hákonar saga 264, p. 148.

[182] See Hákonar saga 243, 259–262, pp. 136, 146–48.

[183] Hákonar saga 268, p. 151, ch. 274, p. 154. The marriage actually occurred in Norway at the same time as the rebellion in Svealand and the battle of Herrevadsbro.

[184] Hákonar saga 274–75, 278–81, 288, 297–98, 301, pp. 154–55, 157–60, 167, 180–83.

[185] Hákonar saga (ed. Mundt) 272, p. 153; (ed. Jónsson) 238, p. 355. See the quote under n. 163 above.

[186] Two were found in the vicinity of Västerås and one during the excavation of Flasta in Uppland. See Lagerqvist 1970 p. 56.

anger at the treatment of the leaders of the 1247–48 rebellion and their families, an increase in the tax burden, opposition to the election of Birger's son Valdemar as king, and Birger's construction of a fort at Stockholm that threatened take control of maritime trade away from local aristocracy. The 1251 rebellion was almost certainly an attempt to remove Valdemar in favour of another descendant of St Erik, presumably Filip, now the eldest son of Knut Holmgersson; no other aim would have been sensible given the fate of Holmger.

In *Erikskrönikan*, despite its otherwise favourable view of him, the Birger Jarl of 1251 is treacherous and vindictive.[187] Having enticed the rebel leaders over the bridge that separated the two opposing forces, under a promise of safe conduct provided by Bishop Kol (seemingly not party to Birger's plan), he seized and executed them. That Birger did achieve total victory is not in doubt, since there is no record of any further rebellions during his lifetime. We need have no doubt that many regretted the turn of events. This is reflected in a number of ways; the statement of the annals, which may be read as neutral at best, the survival of the tradition of Birger's 'treachery', and the emergence of a local martyr cult around Holmger's grave in Sko monastery.[188] The word *rustici* implies that Holmger's rebellion had popular support among the *bönder*, and perhaps the *landbor*, of Uppland. On the other hand, whatever the actual course of events, the victories of Sparsätra and Herrevadsbro strengthened Birger Jarl's position considerably, both through elimination of opposition and the prestige attached to victory. There are no chronicles of thirteenth-century Swedish battles such as those of many western European encounters in the same period, and it may be doubted that the chivalric ethos which exists in the narratives of the battle of Bouvines, for instance, and which is later evident in *Erikskrönikan*,

[187] According to this, at Herrevadsbro Birger seized the opposing lords when they crossed the river in order to meet him, unarmed and under a safe conduct promised by Bishop Kol. Such a scenario makes sense if the rebels had already been defeated or were in a desperate position: otherwise they would have been very unwise not to meet halfway, given that, even judging from the sparse written records, treachery, murder and kidnap were common in pre-1250 Sweden.

[188] In some ways the attitude of many *svear* to Birger Magnusson may have been akin to that of the English to William I, who removed virtually all the native aristocracy and was unquestionably king by 1070, and was afterwards perceived to have been a successful king who had been favoured by God when he fought for the throne, but left a tradition of excessive oppression of the people that appears in sources written during the fifty years after his death.

had yet penetrated the culture of the Swedish nobility, but many *upplänningar* probably understood that God designated who was to be the victor in battle, just as He did in the judicial duel. Birger Jarl's triumph may not have been celebrated in literature, but it legitimised the royal order that was subsequently imposed. The victor was favoured, the vanquished punished for his sins.[189]

3.12. *Valdemar Birgersson 1250–75*

There is no record of any internal disturbance between 1251 and Birger Jarl's death in 1266. Nor was there any conflict with neighbouring realms that threatened any part of Sweden apart from 'Österland', Finland, which was in the early stages of absorption. The successor to Abel in Denmark, Christoffer (1252–59), had problems at home and presented the opportunity to Birger to re-establish good relations. To judge from *Hákonar saga*, the Norwegian king was not particularly impressed with Birger's failure to support him against Christoffer when the three met at the Göta älv in 1254, but Birger seems to have placated him and acted as mediator in the dispute.

In 1257 the kings and the jarl met again and agreed to support the Danish king against his enemies, and Christoffer's niece Sofie, daughter of Erik Plogpenning, was betrothed to King Valdemar.[190] Erik's inheritance included many lands in Sweden, which provided an additional motive for Birger's match, although the initial dowry payment fell well short of Swedish expectations, including only some land in Skåne and payments of gold and silver. The marriage required papal dispensation, which was given in return for a Danish and Swedish promise of action against 'pagans', in this case Novgorod. In 1255–56 the Swedes joined the Teutonic Order in an expedition to Narva, but achieved nothing other than to provoke the Prince of Novgorod, Alexander Nevsky, to ravage parts of Finland in retaliation.[191] Birger also acted to regularise relations with the north German ports. An

[189] See Duby 1990, especially pp. 135–36.

[190] As noted earlier, Sofie must have inherited extensive lands in Sweden, which provided an additional incentive to Birger for the arrangement of this marriage.

[191] Several expeditions against Novgorod, usually attempting to gain control of the Karelian Isthmus, were to fail during the following century, notably those of Tyrgils Knutsson in 1290 and King Magnus Eriksson in 1348, but the frontier nevertheless moved slowly eastwards due to Finnish settlement of Savo.

agreement similar to the one with Lübeck referred to above was made with Hamburg in 1261. Certain historians have suggested that these agreements, followed by similar ones with Riga and the Germans of Gotland in the 1270s,[192] through stipulating that Germans should live by 'the laws of the our fatherland' and 'be called Swedes', were designed to prevent the establishment of German enclaves such as those that developed in Bergen and Novgorod, or, worse, the German domination of 'Danish' northern Estonia.[193] This may be attributing too much foresight to Birger Jarl, but the prevention of the use of local German town laws in Sweden nevertheless simplified the task of *lagman, fogde*, and ultimately, the king, in governing.

Having destroyed his Swedish enemies, Birger concentrated on strengthening the position of his sons at home while gaining political advantage from acting as mediator between Norwegian and Danish kings, and even between Christoffer and his archbishop Jakob Erlandsen. His possible actions at home, the introduction of new laws and taxes, the foundation of Stockholm and the construction of new fortresses, are discussed elsewhere. During a large part of Valdemar's reign, if not all of it while Birger lived, his government was dominated by his father. According to *Erikskrönikan*, Birger appointed a tutor for him.[194] There have been rare finds of bracteates inscribed B, probably Birger's initial, which derive from Västergötland, although these may date to any year after 1248.[195] Like Ulf Fase before him, Birger may have issued his own coins, and the words on his seal, DEI GRACIA DUCIS SVEORUM, are reminiscent of those on the king's seal. Despite his closer connection to Östergötland, Birger Jarl died in Västergötland and was buried in Varnhem monastery.

Birger's residence in Västergötland has been interpreted as a virtual exile, his issue of coins an attempt to assert his authority against that of his son Valdemar, who had tired of his father's overbearing influence. In a more dramatic way, Västergötland became the last refuge of Valdemar himself in 1275 and Magnus Eriksson a century later. Not only was Vastergötland diminishing in economic importance by comparison with other *landskap*, it provided easy access to or from

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[192] ST 1: 109, 119, 126.

[193] Yrwing 1940 pp. 340–41, Dollinger 1970 pp. 53–54. See also Blomqvist 1979 p. 209.

[194] Ek p. 34.

[195] Lagerqvist 1970 pp. 69–70.

Norway and Denmark, either for refuge or invasion by armies supporting rebels or displaced kings. However, Birger was present at a meeting in Kalmar in July 1266, when he donated land at Karleby to Eskilstuna monastery.[196] If he was 'exiled', this happened only at the very end of his life, and any suggestion that he was increasingly excluded from affairs of state is no more than speculation. He certainly died in Long Storby, and was buried in nearby Varnhem, which had benefited greatly from his generosity and was the burial place of the *Erikska ätten* kings. Birger Jarl undoubtedly strengthened the unity of the Swedish kingdom and the authority of the king himself. Treacherous or not, we have more than sufficient evidence that he was a skilled statesman, but whether he single-mindedly followed a far-sighted policy during the thirty years from 1235 to 1266 is another question. Birger may equally be seen as a man of his time, a powerful noble battling for supremacy, perhaps even survival, against his rivals, and one who was so successful in this that he inadvertently began the transformation of the kingdom.

Valdemar's failures after his father's death may be attributable in part to the limited power he had been able to exercise during his father's lifetime. However, there is no evidence of serious problems before the 1270s, and Birger's foreign policy was continued.[197] The threat to his crown came neither from abroad nor from rebel Swedish nobility, but from his own family. Although his eldest brother Magnus had acquired the title *iunior dux* (junior jarl, or *hertig*), in 1255, there is no indication that he acquired all the rights that his father had possessed as *sveajarl* after 1266. The second brother, Erik, had no special privileges. According to *Magnúss saga* and *Erikskrönikan* he therefore acquired the name 'Allsintet' ('Nothing of anything'), a nickname coined by Queen Sofie, if *Erikskrönikan* is to be believed.[198] After a visit to Denmark, Erik returned to Sweden and shortly afterwards left for Norway, where in 1273 he met with Johan Filipsson and King Magnus 'Lagabøter' of Norway in Sarpsborg.[199]

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[196] DS 518.

[197] Valdemar confirmed Lübeck's privileges in 1267 and gave freedom from tolls to the burgers of Riga in the following year: ST 1: 109.

[198] Ek pp. 45–46; Magnúss saga 5, p. 472: *Váru þeir þá fjórir bræðr á lífi skilgetnir: Valdimarr konungr ok hertogi Magnús, junkherra Eríkr ock Benedikt, ok var hann klerkr. Var þat tját fyrir honum, at hann skyldi verða erkibiskup, en junkherra Eiríkr þóttit ekki hafa ok kallaði sik Eirík allsekki.*

[199] Magnúss saga, pp. 472–73.

Erik's plotting may have come to nothing, but Valdemar provided the opportunity for his brothers to remove him. In 1259 the Danish king Christoffer had followed in the footsteps of his brothers Erik and Abel by being murdered. The government of Denmark was left in the hands of his widow Margrete, since Erik Glipping, the prince, was only a boy. With the danger of loss of lands as a result of the marriages of Sofie to Valdemar and her sister Ingeborg to Magnus of Norway, Margrete decided to avoid further possible losses by placing the other daughters, Agnes and Jutta, in Dominican convents. Jutta became prioress, but apparently this did not satisfy her ambitions, and both she and Agnes fled to the court of their sister Sofie in 1271. There, according to *Erikskrönikan*, Jutta became Valdemar's lover.[200]

Even without Jutta's religious vocation and the close relationship between their families, which had required dispensation for Valdemar's marriage, such an affair would have been scandalous. *Erikskrönikan* blames the split between Valdemar and Magnus on the conniving of the queen, Sofie, but does not say this had any connection with the affair. For whatever reason, the Danish crown persuaded the Swedish Church to confiscate Jutta's property on behalf of her convent, a decision that she returned to Denmark to fight, achieving partial success in the year of her death, 1284. For Valdemar's part, he may have made a pilgrimage to Rome as penance, though few reliable sources record this.[201] Detmar says he returned via Lübeck in 1274. If so, he was not welcomed by his brothers. Pope Gregory X appealed to the *hertig, lagmän, domare* and other nobles for calm, in the interest of Church and state, in a letter of August in the same year.[202]

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[200] The tale of the love affair may be true, but elements of the *Ek* version are extremely suspect, for instance, the claim that Valdemar longed for Jutta even before she arrived in Sweden. Danish sources say nothing of any affair between Jutta and Valdemar. Even *Ek* does not make a direct link between the affair and Valdemar's downfall. *Ek* is the earliest source for the tale, and it is subsequently embellished by later annals and chronicles. According to *Chronica Visbycensis*, Valdemar went to Denmark in search of a woman in 1279—this was not Jutta, who was then still alive, but Christine of Holstein! See Ek pp. 47–48, ASMÆ, p. 316; Pipping 1950 pp. 240, 297–99; and Losman 1967 pp. 474–76. A letter contemporary with Valdemar's imprisonment accuses him of liking the company of bad women, but does not mention Jutta: see DS 798.

[201] In Detmar's *Annales Lubecenses*. Some have argued that this journey took place later, in 1276 or 1277. See, for instance, Lönnroth 1959a, pp. 300–306, and Losman 1967 pp. 481–82. For the generally accepted viewpoint, see Rosén 1941 pp. 70–75, and Tunberg 1951 pp. 375–79.

[202] DS 577.

Whether the absence of the king from the list of addressees implies that the Church had already taken sides against Valdemar, as some have contended, may be debated, as there may have been another letter to the king, now lost.[203] The letter also repeated the demand for freedom from secular taxes, which had been made repeatedly during the previous century. This occurred in the context of a long-running dispute over ecclesiastical privileges in Denmark, between Jakob Erlandsen and Christoffer I and then Erik Glipping, the introduction of new taxes in Sweden, and the possible threat to church lands from depredations by both sides in a civil war.[204] The rift between Valdemar and his brothers provided an opportunity for the Church to secure further gains from both parties, who needed its support, but the above letter is also evidence that the Church saw a stable and strong monarchy as being in its own interests. *Erikskrönikan* relates how the seven Swedish bishops attempted to mediate between Valdemar and his brothers, without success.[205] The Church had on the whole benefited from the Folkung victory, Birger Jarl and Erik Eriksson having extended the *tionde* to Uppland, an agreement confirmed by Valdemar in 1252.[206] Only a year previously a serious dispute between Folke Johansson (Ängel), archbishop of Uppsala, and Peter Ragvaldsson over land inherited from Karl Ulfsson had been resolved in the Church's favour.[207]

Magnus had apparently seized many of Valdemar's lands and rights early in 1274, probably during his absence.[208] Although *Magnúss saga* implies that Erik Birgersson was the prime mover behind the rebellion, supported by fractious nobles, notably the Filipssons, this may reflect Erik's closer connections to the Norwegian court at the time.[209] Alone Erik had achieved nothing, and Magnus's subsequent actions do not suggest that he would have been persuaded had he not had a strong interest in acting against the king himself. Gregory sent another letter in January 1275. In order to obtain the help of

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[203] For instance, Rosén 1941 p. 73.

[204] Jakob Erlandsen died in 1274.

[205] Ek p. 49. The meeting is said to have taken place at 'Tränonäss', an otherwise unknown place-name, possibly Strängnäs. See Pipping 1950 pp. 305–06.

[206] DS 380, DS 391–94.

[207] DS 569, DS 598.

[208] That the dispute was open by 22 August 1274 is confirmed in another letter of Gergorius X (DS 582).

[209] Johan and Birger Filipsson, sons of Filip Birgersson and Cecilia, daughter of Knut Jarl.

the Pope, Valdemar had declared himself his vassal and promised to lead a crusade to the east. Accordingly the letter told the archbishop in Uppsala and bishop of Linköping to intervene. But Magnus and Erik obtained help from Erik Glipping, in return for 6000 marks and the loan of a castle and its hinterland, and defeated Valdemar at Hova in 1275. The king fled to Närke, then to Värmland and finally to Norway. There he plotted a counterattack, but was seized by Magnus's men as soon as he returned to Sweden, and forced to make a very unfavourable agreement. The realm was divided, Valdemar receiving Västergötland, Dal, Småland and Värmland, Magnus the rest. Valdemar abdicated his right to the throne. Reluctantly, Ericus Olai would have us believe, Magnus accepted an invitation to become king.[210] At Christmas Magnus assembled the bishops at Dåvö in Västmanland, and we may assume that this was when Magnus, now clearly in the ascendant, finally secured the support of the Swedish Church.[211] On New Year's Day a *gård* at Rölunda was donated for a new canonry at Uppsala cathedral.[212]

Despite his abdication, Valdemar was not content with his new lot, and proceeded to strengthen his position abroad by arranging the marriage of his daughter Ingeborg to Gerhard II, Graf of Holstein, and conducting further negotiations with Magnus Lagabøter. The Norwegian king organised a peace conference at the mouth of the Göta, each side being represented by a *nämnd* (committee), in Magnus's case consisting of churchmen and nobles. Valdemar was offered a 300-mark yearly subsidy, in addition to Hälsingland, Värmland, Dal and Stickeborg castle (location uncertain). The meeting was a total failure, and he returned to Västergötland, thence to Denmark, where he secured the support of Erik Glipping. Erik, it is supposed, had failed to obtain all that Magnus had promised him in return for his earlier support. The result was the devastation of parts of Småland and Västergötland, a defeat for the Danes at Ettak, if *Erikskrönikan* is to be believed, and a Danish siege of Axevall.[213]

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[210] EOC 22, p. 88: . . . *asserunt dominum Magnum valde fuisse difficilem et invitum ad suscipiendam reginationem huiusmodi et onera regie dignitatis*. The passage occurs in paragraph 7 of the 1285 peace agreement between Magnus and Erik Glipping.

[211] DS 605.

[212] DS 606.

[213] Ek pp. 56–59.

The war was expensive for both sides and had achieved no decisive result, and Erik therefore agreed to a peace with Magnus, in return for 4000 marks and the loan of Lödöse and its *län*.[214]

Magnus had meanwhile neutralised Valdemar's link with Holstein, and any possible Danish-Holstein alliance, by arranging a marriage with Gerhard's sister Hedwig (a marriage for which he only later obtained dispensation). Valdemar continued to intrigue with German nobles, but was eventually isolated by his brother's diplomacy, and in 1278 had to surrender, in return for the right to dispose of royal lands in Götaland.[215] It has been generally accepted that he was a weak king, but it is also a truism that history is written by the victor. As observed by a number of scholars, the sources for the conflict between the brothers are poor. The nature of both the Jutta episode and the supposed journey to Rome has been questioned.[216] More than any other source, *Erikskrönikan* has influenced subsequent views of Valdemar. Some of the claims about Valdemar are highly suspect, for instance, the tale that Valdemar was visited by loose women while incarcerated in Nyköping. An opposing view is given in *Magnúss saga*, which favours Magnus Lagabøter's ally Valdemar, and presents the battle between him and Magnus as one between the rightful king and the *svear*.[217] Valdemar's enemies are represented as opportunists who wished to undermine the kingship and realm of Sweden, the battle a continuation, in a sense, of the battle between Birger Jarl and his opponents. In favour of this viewpoint, Magnus Ladulås granted major privileges to the secular nobility after his victory, the price, it might be argued, of their support. On the other hand, it is not impossible that some of Magnus's reforms had their origin in Valdemar's reign.

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[214] EOC 22 (paragraph 3), p. 88.

[215] Precisely what Valdemar offered to give to his possible allies in return for their support has been much discussed. The Markgraf of Brandenburg was offered hereditary rights in Gotland, probably to Valdemar's *kungsgårdar*. See ST 30.

[216] See especially Losman 1967. As she points out, Magnus Ladulås's own sexual behaviour was hardly blameless. According to DD 2:1, 270 he was betrothed to another woman called Sofie and was living with her when he decided to marry Hedwig in 1276.

[217] Magnúss saga 5, pp. 472–73.

3.13. *Magnus Birgersson (Ladulås) 1275–90*

The reign of Magnus Ladulås has often been regarded as a decisive one in the history of the Swedish state, encompassing the period when continental attitudes and values finally permeated the culture of the Swedish nobility, and when rights were granted to the aristocracy that raised it to a position comparable to the knightly class of other European kingdoms. At the same time the apparatus of royal administration was substantially increased, a development considered in more detail in future chapters. However, while the nature of the benefits acquired by both Church and secular nobility were undoubtedly influenced by continental practice, they can also be seen as the price of their support for Magnus in his wars with his brother.

Magnus had first of all to reward his brother Erik, and gave him the title *hertig* (duke), the jarl's inheritance. Perhaps fortunately for Magnus, given his brother's past record of conspiracy, Erik died shortly afterwards. After his death the youngest brother (probably half-brother) Bengt, who proved a loyal servant, was awarded this title. He acquired a new seal in 1282, the contraseal of the earlier kings and jarls. The jarl's position was later reserved for Magnus's second son Birger, but Bengt was recompensed with a new title, *Hertig* of Finland. Magnus Ladulås achieved what Sverker II had failed to do, and could not do in the circumstances of 1202, first of all awarding the title of jarl to his own son, then securing an agreement for his succession to the kingship.[218]

The Church was a major benefactor of the dispute, as King Magnus and his brother Erik both made donations after their victory. Magnus was crowned in May 1276 with the full support of the bishops, having promised full immunity for ecclesiastical lands from taxation, military service and secular judgement. All that the Pope had asked for in 1274 was granted.[219] In addition, privileges were given to the merchants of Riga and Gotland, probably those of Lübeck also.

Ironically, in 1279, shortly after this, a 'folkunga' rebellion broke out in Västergötland, the full background being unknown, which was

[218] Whether Sverker was attempting to make his son jarl or his successor as king is a matter of dispute; see the section on Sverker Karlsson above.
[219] DS 613.

led by former supporters of Magnus, Johan and Birger Filipsson. Presumably Magnus's actions since his victory fell short of what they had hoped for, and they were dissatisfied either with the material reward for their support or with his policies (or both). Lönnroth stated that they were reacting against Magnus's import of foreign nobles and soldiers, which is possible, but wholly without documentary foundation. They did, however, target Magnus's German bride-to-be. Their actions were well timed, coinciding with her journey through Sweden. Her father Gerhard of Holstein was captured by them and imprisoned in their tower at Ymseborg, and Hedwig forced to hide in a nunnery. The rebels next besieged Jönköping, which they failed to take. In the end they were defeated by trickery, Magnus arranging a meeting in Galakvist and seizing them. Both the Filipssons and Johan Karlsson (*Fånoätten*) were disinherited and then condemned to death in 1280. Valdemar may have hoped to profit from their rebellion, but it is not clear that the rebels wanted him back on the throne, particularly as they had been among those who ousted him.[220] Either way, he suffered as a result, losing all his rights in Sweden, and he departed for Denmark.

The Filipssons were not the last powerful family to fall from Magnus's favour. Algot Brynolfsson, knight and *lagman* of Västergötland, became one of his closest advisors. His son Brynolf became Bishop of Skara in 1278. He had at least five other sons, one of whom, Folke, abducted Ingrid, daughter of Svantepolk Knudsen, and carried her off to Norway with him, probably in 1287.[221] She had been betrothed to a Danish nobleman, and Magnus evidently regarded the whole family as implicated in the plot. Algot and his son Rörik were thrown into prison and Karl, Bengt and Peter fled to Norway. Brynolf had to take refuge in Alvastra monastery. Algot was freed on condition that he left his *lagman* post, but Brynolf regained his bishopric in return for an oath of obedience.[222] It is possible that there were other factors behind Magnus's actions, but he may well

[220] Magnúss saga, p. 474.

[221] Ingrid herself may well have been a party to the plot. Folke died sometime before 1310, when she returned to Sweden and re-entered Vreta nunnery, where she became abbess.

[222] Karl returned to Sweden after Brynolf's reinstatement in 1289, apparently under the impression that Magnus's anger had abated, but was then thrown into prison himself. The Algotsson family returned to high favour in the reign of Magnus Eriksson.

have been genuinely infuriated at a breach of the king's peace by people he had shown considerable favour to and concerned to show that no-one could do whatever they liked. Regardless of whether the abduction was the only reason for Magnus's actions, its use to bring down the Algotssons is evidence of the penetration into Sweden of values promoted by the Church.[223]

For Magnus, the price for securing the support of the Church in his struggle with Valdemar was the granting of more privileges to the clergy. In 1279 a provincial council was held at Tälje, in which the bishops agreed to assist in the paying of a debt, probably that owed to Erik Glipping.[224] It is likely that this document was a confirmation of rights already granted or promised, some perhaps by Valdemar. In addition, a series of statutes was laid down, among them one declaring that anyone who drove away, imprisoned or killed a reigning king should be excommunicated. This was precisely what Magnus had done, and it seems that the Church wanted no repeat. Both Valdemar and Magnus had required the backing of Church and secular nobility, and there is some evidence that Valdemar ('V. Dei gracia rex sueorum') may have called his own meeting during the early years of the conflict, the possible origin of the statute concerning removal of the king. In addition, privileges granted to the Church by Magnus at the time of Hedwig's coronation have been preserved. The Church and its lands were given complete freedom from taxation, and fines levied from those who worked church lands were to go to the bishops, not the king, although the king was still free to negotiate levies in special circumstances.

Magnus may well have had a hand in the creation of the *landskapslagar*, as he is given credit for this in *Upplandslagen*, but there is no way of knowing precisely what his contribution might have been. Ecclesiastical prelates were not the only beneficiaries of Magnus's reign. A collection of privileges granted to the nobility is listed in the so-called Alsnö statute, collated or negotiated at the royal *palatium* on Adelsö. There are two copies of the statute, which contradict one another on some points.[225] The earliest dates from 1325, and claims

[223] See note 141 above.
[224] DS 690, DS 691, DS 692.
[225] DS 799. Although Sjöholm argues that the crown was stronger in Birger Jarl's period, she also suggests that the Alsnö statute passage on *edsöre* crimes has been misinterpreted, and was more of a clarification: Sjöholm 1988 pp. 288–92.

that the original dates from 1285. The date is problematical, since several of the listed witnesses were dead by 1285. Whether the extant texts are copies of a final revision, or of a document compiled from several agreed at different meetings, is unclear. There must have been many meetings between the king and his leading nobles, most of which have gone unrecorded, and other agreements may have been made. If this 'statute' was the product of one meeting, it may have occurred not long before or after the Tälje meeting.[226] Since it exists in the form of one document, it will continue to be referred to as the 'Alsnö statute'.

The most notable part of the statute is its third section, which granted freedom from 'all kunglig rätt' (all royal law) to certain people. First among these were Magnus himself and his brother, and those who worked their land, including the *landbor* (rent-paying tenants). Others were exempt because they assisted and advised. These included all the men who served the king or his brother Bengt, the *svenner* (lesser nobility who served in armed retinues) of the archbishop and other bishops, and all those who served with a warhorse. The question of what services were owed to the king, or precisely what 'all kunglig rätt' entailed will probably never be answered; either it was clear to those at the meeting/s, or it was defined elsewhere. It has generally been accepted that freedom from *kunglig rätt* included freedom from taxes. That general freedom from fines and other punishment was granted seems less likely. As in the case of the *landskapslagar*, many things may have been taken as understood by the respective parties and left unsaid. Many landowners cannot have been included in the categories above, and it may have been the king's intention to encourage them to become his servants or at least to provide mounted troops, and so obtain equivalent privileges. These noblemen, later termed the *frälse*, were identified more closely with the king through their special status, and so separated further from the bulk of society.[227] The divide was emphasised still further in the fourteenth century by the building of moated or fenced manors at a distance from the villages that their ancestors had inhabited alongside the other *bönder*, albeit in bigger houses. This separation was arguably a

[226] See, for instance, Tunberg 1951.

[227] The noun *frälse* is related to the verb *frälsa*, 'to save, deliver or liberate'. Originally it referred to all those with the privilege of tax exemption, but came to mean only the secular nobility after the Reformation.

contributory factor in the social unrest that racked the country towards the end of the Middle Ages.

The granting of privileges to landowners in return for service cannot simply be seen as a concession, since it also brought advantages to the king. Many *bönder*, if they had sufficient means, were given the opportunity to become *frälse*. This had major benefits for the king in regions where royal estates were virtually non-existent, since it placed them in his service. In his study of Tiohärad, Småland, Martin Hansson distinguished between the aristocracy that was descended from that of the Iron Age, who often maintained *gårdar* in the traditional places, and a new aristocracy that was more prone to establishing manors in isolated sites in order to emphasise its distinctiveness. These were also the manors that were abandoned more easily in times of crisis during the later Middle Ages, as they had less significance as centres of power in the local collective consciousness.[228] Among the new manors were some that were constructed before 1300, including Hultaby (Njudung) and Agundaborg, but many sites are unnamed.[229] Although emulating the older nobility, the owners of these manors must usually have remained dependent on them, perhaps serving in their retinues.

Besides rewarding those who had helped him and providing opportunities for the wealthier *bönder*, Magnus was also obliged to protect his subjects.[230] The first section of the Alsnö statute regulated *gästning*, the obligation of any free landowner to give lodging to their overlords. The right to occupy someone's home was naturally open to abuse, known as *våldgästning*. Places where travellers could stay were henceforth to be designated by a person appointed by the head of the *hundare* or *härad* for each *by*, if he could not provide their needs himself. Payment for horse fodder and board was to be made according to accepted prices. Nevertheless, some properties were excluded from this obligation completely, including those owned by the king, bishops, knights, or *svenner*. The second section of the statute confirmed the existing statute on *frid*, and the fourth forbad the *länsmän* and those who held other positions in the *län* to levy produce from the *bönder* or take their horses for their own purposes. The regulation of *gästning* suggests that the statute was in part the product

[228] Hansson 2001 pp. 135–42.
[229] Hansson 2001 pp. 217–33 and fig. 105. Hultaby was mentioned in 1353.
[230] See Chapter 12:3 on the medieval 'just king'.

of complaints from those who had suffered during the disorder of 1273–78.

A series of statutes from a meeting at Skänninge in 1284 reinforced or elaborated those from Alsnö. *Frid* was guaranteed in places that the king visited during his stay. Illegal gatherings (especially those of well-born men), in other words, those convened with the intention of plotting against the king or his realm, were forbidden, under threat of confiscation of land, exile, or worse. Attendance at a meeting called by the king without a summons was similarly banned. The king gave his protection to widows, fatherless children and the ageing. Rules governing knights and *svenner* who served on in the king's castles or on his land, and also for those who frequently accompanied the king, were also established. Several scholars have guessed that the last were extended to include rights for those in the *gårdar* of the nobility.

The existence or lack of *gårdsrätter* may be considered a measure of whether Sweden truly became a 'feudal' society, in the legal as opposed to the general sense.[231] If a feudal society is one governed by the relationship between landowners and vassals, in which dues or service are given by the latter in return for land, Sweden could be described as 'feudal' throughout the Middle Ages and up to the eighteenth century. Even so, there were significant differences between Scandinavian realms and those in the rest of Europe, since many farmers, the *bönder*, did not owe rent or services to a greater landowner, who in turn owed services to a greater still. If a political-legal definition of feudalism is sought, in which agreements between landowner and vassal were contracted, giving political, administrative and legal rights on the land, Sweden fits the definition badly. Certain scholars have nevertheless argued that legal powers held by some upper nobility in the seventeenth century originated in the reign of Magnus Ladulås, when he gave privileges to the upper nobility of his council (*riksråd*) in return for their service as knights, but there is no clear evidence for this.[232]

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[231] *Gårdsrätter* may be roughly translated as 'manorial law'.

[232] For instance, Bergquist 1957 pp. 104–06. The seventeenth-century *gårdar* for which evidence of *borgsrätter* exists were Torpa in Kinds *härad* (Västergötland), Bergkvara in Kinnevalds *härad* (Småland) and Ängsö in Tjurbo *härad* (Västmanland). The question of *gårdsrätter* is considered in Chapter 4.

Magnus Ladulås died in 1290, and was buried in the St Klara Franciscan nunnery near Stockholm.[233] He left Sweden in the hands of a council, since his son Birger was a minor. Thirteen years later a repeat of the disturbances by which he had gained the throne erupted, when his younger sons challenged Birger. As it had in 1274–76, civil war weakened the government, but the dynasty survived for another seventy years. Magnus has been seen as one of the successful kings of Sweden, but how he was regarded by contemporaries remains uncertain. If his name 'Ladulås' ('barn-lock') was given at this time, it was presumably a negative reflection on encroaching royal administration and increasing taxation, perhaps coined by lower nobility or *bönder*, but the name is not recorded before the fifteenth century, when Dominican friars interpreted it in a favourable light.

3.14. *Final remarks on the nature of conflict in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sweden*

No more is heard of *folkungar* after Magnus Ladulås's removal of the Filipssons and their allies. Because of the lack of detailed sources the motives of all the *folkunga* rebels from 1208 to 1280 must remain uncertain. The use of the name *folkungar* by *Erikskrönikan* and some monastic annals for participants in successive rebellions has nevertheless contributed to an idea that they may have had consistent aims throughout the period. K.H. Karlsson was the first to suggest that *folkungar* derived from the name Folke (possibly Folke the Fat), but argued that the name later became a faction name. Pipping agreed that the term could mean 'followers of Folke', but pointed out that the *-ung* suffix was rare in Sweden, and suggested that the name *folkungar* should be compared with twelfth- and thirteenth-century Norwegian faction names such as *ribbungar* and *slittungar*. Sture Bolin then suggested that the name was that of a kin-group faction, derived from the name of its leader in 1210, Folke Birgersson. He pointed out that the Norwegian names do not have a personal name as a prefix, and a better comparison may be Icelandic names such as *Gíslungar*, *Snorrungar* and *Sturlungar*, of which only the last could

[233] DS 802. Magnus's daughter Rikissa later became the nunnery's prioress.

arguably be a 'party' as well as a family name.[234] As in *Erikskrönikan* these names include the *-ung* suffix.[235] That Folke Jarl and his family, and perhaps allies too, were the first *folkungar* has been accepted by most commentators since, but not all—for instance, Dövring later made the suggestion that the name derived from the noun *folkr*, rather than a personal name.[236]

The sources which use the term *folkungar* are inconclusive. The thirteenth-century *Västgötalagen* king list implies a genealogical connection, and states that the *folkungar* took the life of King Sverker. So does *Erikskrönikan*, which says Folke Jarl had a powerful and large family, with the implication that the *folkunga rothe* were the family when it refers to 'the folkungar and their friends'.[237] Referring to the battle of Gestilren in 1210, *Annales 1160–1336* imply that the *folkungar* were followers of Folke Jarl, given the large number of their dead.[238] Earlier annals that record the battle do not mention *folkungar*. As observed by Carlsson, Pipping and Bolin drew different conclusions on the meaning of the passage in chapter 262 of *Hákonar saga*, which refers to Birger Jarl's execution of 'Holmgeir son Knúts konungs langa, frænda Ulff jarls ok annarra fólkunga', Pipping concluding that all the *folkungar* were friends with one another, Bolin that some of the *folkungar* belonged to the same kin-group.[239] With widely overlapping family groups, a very large number of people could often claim kinship with one person. By the fifteenth century, if not before, *folkungaätt* sometimes included people only distantly related to Folke Jarl, including those descended though the female line.[240]

Arguably the greatest influence on the modern view of the *folkungar* has been exerted by Erik Lönnroth. Lönnroth drew on previous work by Pipping and Bolin, and accepted that *folkungar* may well originally have been supporters of Folke Jarl at Gestilren, but argued

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[234] Pipping 1950 pp. 43–44.
[235] See Ståhle 1946 p. 87, and Wessén 1932 p. 83.
[236] Dovring 1951 p. 110.
[237] Ek p. 28.
[238] ASMÆ, p. 267. *Bellum fuit Gestilren. XVI⁰. kalendas augusti vbi occubuerunt Swercherus Rex et Fulco Dux et multi de fulcungis.*
[239] S. Carlsson 1953 p. 76. Pipping translates the passage as, 'Holmger, son og Knut Långe, friend to Ulf and *the* other folkungar', Bolin as, '. . . friend to Ulf and other folkungar'. See Hákonar saga 262, p. 148.
[240] S. Carlsson 1953 pp. 78–79.

that the name also became a faction name.[241] He did not reject Westman's argument that certain groups, notably those associated with the *Erikska ätten*, were opposed to the universal Church as espoused by Gregory VII, and subsequently prelates such as Eskil (Archbishop of Lund 1137–77), but argued that the *folkungar* of the thirteenth century were most of all opposed to any increase in royal power, especially if it eroded the right of the nobility to elect kings.[242] Even before Gestilren this 'programme' was evident, for instance, in opposition to any hint of hereditary succession, which he detected not only in the rebellion against Sverker the Younger, but also the earlier rejection of Knut Eriksson's plans for one of his sons to succeed him. As noted above, there were also other reasons for the *Folkungaätten* to promote Sverker's succession to Knut Eriksson, and a six-year gap between Sverker's probable appointment of his one-year old son as his successor and his removal from the throne, indicating that other factors must have been involved in his removal.

It was no doubt in the interests of powerful nobles to ensure that no family gained a lasting grip on the kingship, but the word 'programme' implies something more, a coherent group with a longer term political agenda. The problem is analogous to Westman's argument that whereas the *Sverkerska ätten* favoured the universal Church, the *Erikska ätten* and rebels of the thirteenth century favoured a 'national church'. Such terminology implies political structures and thinking of the type encountered in the modern world, a battle of ideologies that were sufficiently strong and well thought out to engender a continuous conflict between more or less stable factions for a century. The idea of a 'national' (Swedish) church organisation is unlikely to have appealed to the nobility of Västergötland or Uppland any more than one controlled by Rome, even if such a concept existed in the twelfth century. It would be more correct to say that the nobility jealously guarded their rights to appoint clergy, just as they wished to elect or approve or reject kings. It may well be, as Lönnroth emphasised, that *Västgötalagen* upholds these rights, but it is another matter to suggest that Eskil Magnusson had a coherent 'programme' in mind when he constructed its *Rättlösabalk*, even if it

[241] Bolin then suggested that *folkungar* could indeed have been a genealogical group, the name derived from Folke Jarl. See Pipping 1950, and Bolin 1934, 210–42.
[242] Lönnroth 1959b p. 22.

could be proved that he did this.[243] Eskil was a *lagman* in the 1220s, and as such a representative of the local nobility, much as Birger Petersson was in 1296, when he and his associates codified *Upplandslagen*, which also insisted on the right to elect a king. As for the *Sverkerska ätten*-Gregorian Church alliance, it should be remembered that much of the information received by successive Popes about the situation in Sweden was filtered through the Archbishops of Lund. Absalon (1177–1201), son of Asser Rig, and Andreas Sunesen (1201–1224) were both members of the Hvide family, which had close kinship ties to Sverker's descendants. Absalon's predecessor Eskil had been a member of a different (and later rival) Danish magnate family, that of Trued, and appears to have adopted a pragmatic approach when working with successive Swedish kings, but for the first nineteen years of his archbishopric he was closely associated with Gisle, Sverker's ally.

Although the name *folkungar* probably derived from Folke Jarl, its meaning could well have changed over time, and it may be that the term *folkungar* later became a general term for rebels against the reigning king, possibly even with derogatory overtones. Although its origin was very different, its sense may therefore have become akin to the semi-pejorative Norwegian faction names *baglar* ('croziers') and *birkibeinar* ('birchlegs'). The attitude of the author of *Erikskrönikan* is unclear, but he was already at a sufficient distance from the events he described to assume greater continuity in the aims of the rebels than there really was. So too were the monastic annals, which in any case provide scant information. Neither these sources nor the name *folkungar* indicate an ideological basis for the successive rebellions, nor does a family link with a former rebel provide a credible reason for rebellion in itself. The Filipssons may have drawn inspiration from their knowledge of Folke Jarl's victory, but there must have been some other cause of dissatisfaction.

The inadequacy of our sources precludes any definite statement on the objectives of the individuals who rebelled against various kings in the thirteenth century, but all except Karl and Haralder, named as rebels in 1229 by *Erikskrönikan* but otherwise unknown, were close to the of hub of power in some way. Some, like Knut Långe and his sons or Knut Magnusson, had a possible claim to the kingship

[243] Lönnroth 1959b pp. 17–21.

themselves, others were their kin or people who were (or had been) among the king's advisors in the past. All those who rebelled were arguably threatened with exclusion from, or a diminution of influence in, the king's ruling circle. This provides a more plausible explanation for their actions than any ideological standpoint, since the battle for influence around the throne was an underlying cause of struggles among the high nobility in every kingdom of medieval Europe.[244] By contrast there is little evidence for long-term political programmes.[245]

In certain kingdoms in the early stages of state formation the problem of uniting the kingdom was aggravated by regionalised power structures, in which the landholdings of some powerful kin-groups or alliances of landowners with similar interests were concentrated in specific regions of settlement, often separated from other settlement regions by topography. This was the case with Scotland, where the kingdom was consolidated from Lothian, the most 'European' region where the strength of the Canmore kings was based, and resistance came mainly from western and northern Scotland, which looked to the Irish and North Seas.[246] A comparison may be made with Sweden, where Götaland had more links with Denmark and was more strongly influenced by European trends than Svealand. It was from Götaland that the impetus for closer union came, whereas the Svealand aristocracy probably had stronger external economic and political links with the east Baltic region than with Germany or Denmark, although evidence for this is much poorer than that for links between western and northern Scotland and Ireland or Norway.[247] It is also probable that linguistic and 'ethnic' divisions played a greater role in Scotland, even if exaggerated by historians in the past, whereas the apparent regional pattern of rival interests in Sweden

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[244] See the comments in Althoff 2003a pp. 16–28.

[245] As noted in the Introduction, to judge by extant histories written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there was no concept of social change and the social order was believed to be something essentially static. Events were determined by the actions of God and great men.

[246] See McDonald 2003 pp. 61–123. Exclusion from the ruling elite is a factor that is understated by McDonald when discussing possible resentment at the influx of Norman aristocracy and 'feudal' ideas (pp. 119–23). He does, however, emphasise the royal descent of many of the rebels, and reject an 'anti-feudal' ideological basis to the rebellions.

[247] In Scotland the impetus for closer union came from north Lothian, and the original impetus in Norway came from Viken and Vestfold.

was the result of the distribution of family landholdings. In Norway the *borgerkriger* were characterised by kin rivalries rather than regional or ideological hostility. Viken-Vestfold was the earliest centre of power for the Yngling dynasty, but rival kings, rebels and their kin were not associated as strongly as those of Sweden with particular regions. Different districts and their *ting* might choose rival kings, but during the course of their battles positions might be reversed.[248]

Whether any aristocracy perceived long-term trends in the extension of royal and ecclesiastical administration may be doubted, but they could react violently if they found themselves threatened by more powerful interests and their leaders excluded from the decision-making process. Unfortunately evidence for the attitude of local landowners in Svealand is poor, and even their names are lacking. Although opposition to an increasing tax burden is a motive for rebellion more generally associated with the later Middle Ages than the thirteenth century, it probably contributed to unrest among the peasantry. The rebellion of 1247 may have been a forerunner to many in the fifteenth century, in which noble rebels provided the core, and the leaders, of mainly peasant armies. Two different groups with different grievances were making common cause against the existing royal government.[249] Both the number and severity of revolts in late medieval Sweden were greater because economic circumstances had deteriorated and the governments of successive Union kings showed little sensitivity to Swedish conditions. Unfortunately thirteenth-century sources tell us nothing about the attitude of *bönder* or *landbor* in any rebellions—perhaps Karl and Haralder, the mysterious rebels of 1229, were two of those who found common cause with throne pretenders. It should be emphasised, moreover, that the paucity of detailed sources can give a misleading impression: there were almost certainly rival interests among unnamed neighbouring landowners within each region. There is no way of knowing precisely how many of the *upplenszka* supported the Knutssons and their allies in 1248 or 1251, while Bengt's letters of the 1230s give a clue that not everyone in Östergötland supported the Magnussons. Civil

[248] See, for instance, Sigurðsson 1999a pp. 81–87, 137–52.

[249] Harrison 1997. He distinguishes rebellions of such alliances from those that were purely peasant risings.

war with its corresponding breakdown of order undoubtedly provided an opportunity for the settling of private feuds.[250]

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries several European kingdoms were bedevilled with repeated rebellions led by descendants of former kings whose family branches were excluded from power. Their number could be considerable in a system of bilateral kinship. This led to a chaotic situation in Norway between 1130 and 1164, when an effort was made to put an end to joint kingships.[251] However, even potential throne pretenders could be placated and turned into allies if given sufficient authority within the king's circle of advisors, as occurred in Norway with Sverre's appointment of Filip Birgersson as jarl. In Sweden, although our evidence for twelfth-century events is extremely limited, it appears that successive *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten* kings, notably Knut Eriksson and Sverker the Younger, attempted to exclude the rival family from power. Knut's probable marriage to Cecilia may be seen as an attempt to win over some of the *Sverkerska ätten* supporters, but left him dominant and the male members of the Sverker line out in the cold. Attempts were made to win over other powerful noble kin-groups by giving them influence at court, but Sverker managed to alienate many of these, and paid the price.

Ultimate victory for either Erik or Sverker lines was made impossible by the interventions of the powerful *Folkungaätten* and its allies, until the male line of Sverker died out in 1222. Prior to 1250, when Birger Jarl secured the election of his own son as king, none of the actions of any members of the *Folkungaätten* suggest that they had a long-term aim of strengthening the kingship—far from it, their interventions ensured that there was no continuity in the kingship. In 1196, 1208–10 and 1216 they engineered the succession of a member of the rival family to that of the incumbent or recently deceased king. In the last case it can be argued that there was no candidate from the same family of a suitable age to succeed the deceased king, but this was not the case in 1195–96, and in 1208 the king was expelled. The family's interest was in securing and increasing their

[250] A better-documented example of the chaos that could ensue during a prolonged struggle for the throne was provided by the civil war in England during the years 1139–53: see Bradbury 1996.

[251] See Moseng et al. 1999 pp. 103–25, and on the law of 1164, Helle 1974 pp. 59–64.

own influence at court, in other words, in government, a policy that had variable results as regards the peace of the realm. The acquisition of estates scattered over Närke, Södermanland and Götaland by Birger Brosa and his brothers and successors (possibly also his predecessors), like that of Bo Jonsson in the fourteenth century, was probably intended to maximise their influence over the king. This outlook may not have been confined to the *Folkungaätten*, but was possibly also that of Erik Jedvardsson and Sverker and their ancestors before they became kings, and families such as the *Boberg ätten*.[252] In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it may have been one of the major differences between the landowning families of north-eastern Svealand, who were more inward-looking or looked ot the east, and those elsewhere in Sweden.

After the death of Johan Sverkersson in 1222, rival factions developed within both *Erikska ätten* and *Folkungaätten*. In the interest of peace and unity of the realm, Ulf Jarl, *de facto* ruler of Sweden in the years 1234–47, apparently endeavoured to allow all dynastic and regional factions some influence over government, but his successor Birger Jarl and Holmger Knutsson returned to the pattern of the former rivalry of *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten*, in which the only alternatives were control of the kingship or exclusion. Both rivalries arguably acquired the character of a family feud, that of the *Sverkerska ätten* and *Erikska ätten* extending intermittently from the mid-twelfth century to 1210, and that of the Magnussons and Knut Långe and his sons possibly from the late 1220s to 1252. Perhaps this was reflected in the severity with which Birger Jarl crushed his opponents; whatever the reason, he ensured that for a century thereafter struggles for the kingship took place within his family.

In wider terms, the struggles between various factions between 1130 and 1250, and even earlier than that, may be seen as a by-product of centralising state formation. Although the process of centralisation ultimately brings about greater coordination in government, it also involves disruption as rival elite groups battle for control of limited resources.[253] In a chiefdom society or heterarchy, which is inherently unstable and in which the leader and his immediate circle are dependent on other elite leaders to collect tribute and raise

[252] See Appendix 1.
[253] See, for instance, Cohen and Service [eds] 1978, and Fried, in the same book.

military forces, shifting alliances and changes of leadership between one group and another are common. Election of kings was a vestige of this. By the reign of Sverker, processes that restricted the ability of many elite kin-groups to gain leadership were already at work, as it seems that it was already necessary to have the prestige of a royal ancestor, or at least to marry a former queen, to be elected king. However, the kings of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries still needed the cooperation of magnate networks outside their own to rule, to the extent that their wealth and power could equal that of the king and his own immediate kin. In assenting to or assisting in the creation of some central institutions, very likely the *husaby*-network and the *ledung* fleet levy, they hastened the process of state formation, but they also hindered the process when it endangered their own access to the wealth of the kingdom, in other words, their participation in controlling those resources. Several anthropologists have emphasised the requirement for a permanent and exclusive hierarchy to reduce conflict over leadership.[254] Inevitable or not, since the factions that battled for control of the kingdom were rival kin-group networks, control was ultimately restricted to one. Nevertheless, conflict continued in medieval Sweden, as the kingship did not become hereditary and the nobility did not relinquish its right to choose or dispose of kings. Only in the sixteenth century was the inheritance kingship stabilised in this way.

[254] Cohen 1978 p. 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STATE AND THE LAW

It may be stating the obvious to say that law is intimately connected to politics, since those who exercise political power can determine who creates law and how it operates. Nevertheless, with the possible exception of very recent times, governments have not by and large been preoccupied with law creation. On the other hand, at the very time when the Church began to use a single codex of canon law as the basis for its claims to judicial rights and taxes, works that emphasised the king's place as divinely appointed guardian of law within the political domain appeared. Foremost among these was John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* of 1159, in which he argued that the king should act as minister to the Church in carrying out coercive functions which it could not. Views of the king as lawmaker or law-enforcer within the political community, a situation brought about by natural law as a force for good in preventing the disintegration of society, were subsequently developed in the light of Aristotle by philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus. Not surprisingly, kings who claimed spiritual sanction themselves were less than willing to subscribe to theories that subjected them to the Pope, and little is found of this in Friedrich II's *Constitutions of Melfi* (1231) or the preambles to the numerous law-codes that appeared throughout Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Some went further than simply ignoring the claims of the Pope: following the battle between Emperor and Pope known as the Investiture Contest, certain clerks in secular employ represented the king as the highest authority and the embodiment of justice.[1]

Whether perceived as servant of the Universal Church or not, in the centuries following the 'rediscovery' of the corpus of Roman law at the end of the twelfth century the king was increasingly represented as a fount of justice. Even if medieval kings themselves rarely

[1] See Chapter 11.3 for a further discussion of the representation of kings as justice personified.

took part in compiling law-books, they were keen to have them compiled in their name. Medieval European law developed from Roman law, and like Roman law was largely the work of jurists, in this case with an ecclesiastical training. The majority of legal practice was inherited or created through imitation. When new legislation was required the codifiers borrowed from other codes. Certainly individual regulations might be adjusted to favour king or state, but there was no wholesale invention and imposition of new ones. It was not necessary, or even possible in the conditions of medieval Europe, for all legal and fiscal procedures to be written down. Relatively complex illiterate societies can be regulated by oral tradition. The main impetus for the collection of laws in written form in medieval European states was the creation of new circumstances arising from religious and social change, especially Christianisation, the Church being the major transmitter of literacy, and subsequently from pressure to standardise by central administration. Periodic codifications produced by governments were usually intended to make law more accessible (not least to king and nobility), and were derived from existing practice.

The reduction of customary law to writing and its combination with legal traditions of the Roman and Byzantine empires was a very slow process. Divergent customs prevailing in different regions usually made the unification of laws throughout a given realm impossible, even when a sufficiently powerful monarchy existed to attempt law codification. Furthermore, such attempts were frequently opposed by the nobility, since codification would tend to favour royal power by determining questions of disputed jurisdiction in the king's favour. Hence general codification could be instituted only by powerful monarchs, and attempts did not begin in northern and eastern Europe until the thirteenth century. The majority of medieval law codes in these regions belong to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Magnus Lagabøter of Norway being the only king able to create a true national law code before 1300.[2] Other collections of written laws (sometimes called codes) were created out of necessity, primarily to handle matters that could not be dealt with under customary procedures.[3]

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[2] In central and eastern Europe only Casimir III of Poland and Stefan Dušand of Serbia (somewhat unsystematically) were able to codify laws, and then not until the mid-fourteenth century. The Danish *Jyske lov* was arguably also intended to be a national code.

[3] See, for instance, Franklin and Shephard 1996 pp. 219–25 on the *Russkaya Pravda*.

The medieval regional Swedish law codes incorporate matters touching almost every aspect of people's lives, but the most systematically regulated parts are those that modify existing custom or concern relatively recent innovations—for instance, laws based on church canon law, the procedures for jury trial, and matters involving fines and other payments to the king or his agents or the Church. It should not be expected, therefore, that they would give us a complete picture of the judicial process or of administration, and it cannot be assumed that they were uniformly followed in their *landskap*. More so than today, throughout medieval Europe law was administered within the local community.

The absence of codified laws did not mean, of course, that there were no rules and no procedures for the prevention of endemic violence in pre-literate societies, rather that they functioned differently. Violence often arose suddenly from unexpected circumstances, but it could result in long-term feuding. Disagreement must also have arisen over use of resources, particularly land and livestock. Right of ownership as we understand it now is grounded in law, and therefore requires an established judicial system to function. This 'dominium' over land, including the right to expel others, destroy, sell or lend it, was inherited from Roman law. Research into land ownership in chieftain societies suggests that it was acquired and maintained by force; the *ting* meeting (if such it was called before written records) did not involve a legal battle in the modern sense, but a confrontation, each landowner asserting his rights with his allies backing him up, while a mediator assisted in the negotiation.[4] In making any settlement, both sides in a dispute were considering the force that the rival alliance could bring to bear should no agreement be reached. The procedure by which an assembly was conducted may have been governed by ritual, but the result was not governed by laws imposed by a third party. This was essentially the way in which the *þing* of medieval Iceland functioned.[5] Some form of assembly to resolve disputes must have existed in prehistoric Sweden, but that it was the *ting* cannot be definitively proved with the present state of research.

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[4] See, for instance, Skre 1998, Chapter 1.

[5] See Durrenberger 1998 pp. 182–86. There need be no doubt that a concept of possession of delineated areas of land existed before the influence of Roman law was felt in Sweden, as evidenced by the rune-stones mentioned in Chapter 1, but they were not accurately measured and possession was not defined in legal terms until later.

Archaeological and place-name evidence obviously tells us little about how pre-Christian law functioned, but does indicate that many of the known medieval assembly sites were in use in the Viking Period, perhaps earlier. The Old Norse word *Þingvollr* (*þing-vollr*, or *vall*, 'assembly-field') recurs as a place-name in several countries that were occupied by Norse settlers, as well as in Scandinavia itself. Several medieval *ting*-sites were marked by mounds that were used in meetings (including several called 'Tingshögen'), rune-stones, standing stones, Iron Age and Viking Period graves and sites with names denoting cult-centres. These include the *hundaresting* site in Seunda in Västmanland, where there is a huge mound, Anundshögen, and where the boat burials of Tuna in Badelunda were discovered, and another at Aspa in Rönö *hundare* (Södermanland), with a Tingshögen and several rune-stones nearby.[6] These were judicial district assembly-sites in the Middle Ages, but others may have belonged to great landowners. One such is at Karlåker in Österrekarne *hundare*, also with a Tingshögen. A nearby rune-stone, like another just to the north, was obviously commissioned by a member of a powerful local family.[7] As noted by Brink, several *ting*-sites also have names with the elements *löt* (as in Aspa above, *Aspa löt* in medieval documents), *ås, vång* or *vang* and *åker*, all denoting 'field', like *vall/vollr*. At Hög, a medieval *ting* site in Hälsingland, an iron ring (probably ninth-century) with a runic inscription that includes the phrase 'according to the law of the people' was found, testifying to the existence of legal procedures of some sort before Christianisation. As the place-name indicates, there is a mound there, Kungshögen, and the site is also listed as part of 'Uppsala öd' (royal estate) in the fourteenth-century *Hälsingelagen*.[8]

Our knowledge of the law and legislation in medieval Sweden derives largely from the extant law codes of the late thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Of the regions that would be expected to have had written laws by the mid-fourteenth century, only Närke lacks them, leading to the suspicion that its law-code may have been lost altogether.[9] Many of the laws in these codes undoubtedly originated

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[6] Brink 2004 pp. 207–10. The stones are Sö136, Sö137 and Sö138.
[7] Sö 104 and Sö 105.
[8] Brink 2004 pp. 211–13.
[9] Some peripheral and partially settled regions used the laws of neighbouring *landskap*: Gästrikland those of Uppland, Dal and possibly Värmland those of Västergötland, and Dalarna perhaps those of Västmanland, although there is a possible *Dalalagen*, which has also been suggested as a law of Värmland: see below.

in earlier practice, but it is impossible to determine precisely when or in what form they existed at any given time. What is undeniable is that the written law codes were strongly influenced by continental ones, mediated especially through Denmark. There are strong similarities between *Skånelagen* and the later Swedish law codes, particularly those of neighbouring areas, Götaland and Småland.[10] Nevertheless, whatever the jurisdiction of the episcopate of Lund, the statement in *Östgötalagen* that Birger Jarl abolished the iron ordeal in Götaland suggests that even those Swedish regions close to Skåne were behind Denmark in legal developments, and that the impact of *Skånelagen* was limited.[11] It cannot be assumed that similar laws existed in Svealand in the early thirteenth century simply because they existed in Denmark, Norway and Götaland.[12]

Swedish law codes differ from Danish ones in their format, most being divided into *balkar*, although the way in which they are divided varies.[13] Holmbäck and Wessén believed that this form of division in the Swedish laws was a loan from *Västgötalagen*, a belief partly based on the premise that this law code is older.[14] The manuscripts of the laws present numerous problems of dating and interpretation. *Östgötalagen* exists in only one complete manuscript, dated to the mid-fourteenth century.[15] The consensus among scholars is that the original law-text appeared in c. 1290. *Västgötalagen* exists in early and late versions, and there is a fragment dated to c. 1250.[16] This is the

[10] The *Manhelgdsbalk* of *Upplandslagen*, *Västammanalagen* and *Södermannalagen* all have the same order as *Skånelagen*, although in other respects the laws of Svealand resemble their Norwegian counterparts more than the Danish law codes: Sjöholm 1988 p. 104.

[11] ÖgL E 17.

[12] As Sjöholm does: Sjöholm 1988 p. 105.

[13] The term *-bolkr* is also used for sections in most of the law-codes of Norway, and probably stems from Old Norse *bálkr*, meaning partition or wall. See SLL [Holmbäck and Wessén, ed. and tr], 1. *Östgötalagen*, Inledning p. XXI. *Upplandslagen*, *Västmannalagen* and *Hälsingalagen* are all divided into eight *balkar*, whereas *Södermannalagen* has twelve, *Dalalagen* seven. *Östgötalagen* is divided into eight *balkar*, but in a different way from the Svealand laws, and three of its sections are not named 'balk'. *Västgötalagen* has a large number of sections, only half being named *balk*.

[14] SLL 1, *Östgötalagen*, Inledning p. XXI.

[15] Sjöholm's suggestion that on the basis of the 'power structure' the law must have come later than Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* is based on the premise that the relative strength of the nobility as opposed to the king increased progressively throughout the fourteenth century, and ignores regional differences. See Lindkvist 1989. See also Lindkvist 1988 p. 29, note 7.

[16] The two versions, earlier and later, are referred to in the footnotes as VgL 1 and VgL 2.

only script dated to the period of Birger Jarl. Early *Västgötalagen* can be given a *terminus ante quem* of 1281, the year when Bishop Brynolf Algotsson's statute was instituted. However, this law text has been attributed to the *lagman* Eskil Magnusson, which would date it to c. 1220.[17] All late thirteenth-century references to significant deeds by earlier members of the Bjälbö family must be treated with caution, as the Folkung dynasty was then established, but the attribution to Eskil is possible. Eskil must have been familiar with Norwegian as well as Danish law texts, since he had a strong connection with its highest nobility through his wife Kristine. He may well have introduced reforms under the influence of *Skånelagen* and the work of the Church. The later *Västgötalagen* is assumed to be a reworking of the earlier, and can be given a *terminus post quem* of 1345, since there is a reference to the meeting at Tälje in that year.

The other law-text from the south of Sweden is the *Tiohärads kyrkorätt*. This exists in two manuscripts, written in different hands but both contemporary with Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*. Six pages of eight survive, the last two having been lost.[18] The earlier version of the *landslag* (Schlyter's ms A) is mid-fourteenth-century. Schlyter's belief that there were earlier versions of both these law-codes cannot be definitely established.[19] On the basis of a letter which should have been placed after the introduction Holmbäck and Wessén concluded that the law applied in Östergötland but also central Svealand.[20] However, the statement that the *häradshövding* applied even in parts of Svealand may mean nothing more than that different parts of the law code were used in different regions.[21]

Södermannalagen has survived in two parchment texts belonging to the mid-fourteenth century, which differ in certain respects, and both may have been altered several times.[22] When changes were made

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[17] VgL 1, 4:14.

[18] It is often referred to as the *Smålandslagen kyrkobalk*, since Schlyter argued that the *kyrkorätt's* ms A was a precursor to manuscript D of the *landslag* and the whole text was part of an earlier '*Smålandslag*'. However, there is no evidence of an earlier manuscript, and the *kyrkorätt* can equally well be regarded as an early version of part of the *landslag*: see SLL 5, *Smålandslagens kyrkobalk*, Inledning pp. LXXV–LXXVI, and Sjöholm 1988 p. 90.

[19] The law was revised in 1442 when Christoph of Bavaria became king.

[20] SLL 6, *Smålandslagens kyrkobalk*, Inledning.

[21] Sjöholm 1988 p. 85.

[22] Sjöholm believes she has identified a number of alterations to both texts. There appears to be a missing chapter between the deed and testament in ms B, which she thinks was removed because, on grounds of comparison with ms A, it was

cannot be certain, but it is possible that ms B was written after the appearance of the early *landslag*, which would also fit with palaeographic evidence.[23] The introduction in *Södermannalagen* is almost identical to that of *Upplandslagen*. There are five extant medieval texts of the latter, dating to the period between 1300 and 1360, but the ecclesiastical section also appears in approximately 120 texts of the land law and town law texts.[24] Ms B is incomplete, appearing in a collection, and ms C is a copy of it.[25] The five extant versions presumably had a predecessor, perhaps the 'old law book' referred to in ms A.[26] Four of them, ms A, Ängsö, Esplunda and ms E, include a confirmation of Birger Magnusson dated 2 January 1296.[27] *Upplandslagen* is the only regional law-code that can be dated with any certainty to the thirteenth century, although the oldest existing versions may have appeared up to a century after the original.[28]

In addition to those mentioned above, there are three other law-codes from Svealand. *Hälsingelagen* survives in one manuscript, dated to the mid-fourteenth century by Schlyter,[29] and *Västmannalagen* in three fourteenth-century versions. The manuscript known as *Dalalagen* (Cod. Holm. B 54) was not called this until after the Middle Ages. Schlyter regarded it as an earlier version of *Västmannalagen*, a view echoed by

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unfavourable to the Church. According to K.H. Karlsson, the latter part of flock 15, *Vm siala gift*, and the whole of flock 16, *Vm testament*, have been taken out (Södermannalagen: efter Cod. Havn. Ny kgl. Saml. 4:0 no. 2237 [ed. Karlsson], Inledning.). Holmbäck and Wessen claim that the missing flock contained only the rubric to the part after: see SLL 3 *Södermannalagen*, p. 12. Sjöholm rejects this. She points out that the missing sections concerned inheritance rights and donations of land to the Church, which did not fit with the other laws in the code.

[23] Södermannalagen [ed. Karlsson], p. 18.

[24] Schlyter knew of only three of the five full texts, called by him hs A, hs B and hs C (*handskrift*, here translated *manuscript*, ms). The other two are known as the *Angsöhandskriften* and *Esplundahandskriften*. Schlyter dated ms A to c. 1300, because of ornamentation at the end of the ecclesiastical section which is marked MCCC. Not all scholars have accepted this.

[25] Schlyter's ms E is the first printed version (now lost), which many scholars sought to suggest, without much basis, was the nearest to the original.

[26] SdmL, Add: 12. Holmbäck's dating of this text to 1325 is still accepted by many scholars: see SLL 3, *Södermannalagen*, Inledning p. XVII. The earliest and most complete version, ms A, is that referred to unless stated otherwise.

[27] According to two seventeenth-century records there was also a Latin parchment, but this was lost, probably in the Uppsala fire of 1702.

[28] Sjöholm believes that the differing contents of the manuscripts give an indication that the *Manhelgdsbalk* and the second index were added later, and that there was an earlier *Upplandslagen* (earlier than 1296), or at least its ecclesiastical section.

[29] Sjöholm 1988 p. 88.

Wiktorsson on philological grounds, but Sjöholm suggested that it might have been an early law code of Värmland and Dal, the region north of Västergötland.[30] She does not accept that the law texts can be dated on philological grounds, but does believe they can be dated on grounds of content.[31] Since all the *landskapslagar* appear to contain a mixture of new provisions and older custom or possibly written laws, some obsolete, and also occasionally contradictory clauses in different *balkar*, dating on content is far from easy. Dating on philological grounds is also problematic. It is possible that the people of regions such as fourteenth-century Dalarna or Värmland preserved older forms of speech or dialect than those of neighbouring *landskap*, and Gudrun Utterström has also argued that there was a fashion for writing in an antiquated style in the fourteenth century.[32] The B 54 law-code bears more similarities with the laws of Svealand than those of Götaland, and an origin in Västmanland, quite possibly Dalarna, considered part of Västmanland throughout the fourteenth century, seems most probable. The varying and often disputed dates of all the law manuscripts make accurate assessment of their development virtually impossible without other written evidence, which is sparse and often suspect.

There is also disagreement over whether these law-codes were derived from pre-Christian 'Germanic' custom or from Roman and Lombard Law, which has profound implications for the development of Swedish law in the thirteenth century. Still prevalent is the view that a pre-Christian Germanic clan society can be identified in the form and wording of the Scandinavian law-codes, which are therefore seen to derive from oral tradition. Different written law-codes have been compared in the hope of revealing a common origin,[33] and their detail and language, especially that of *Västmannalagen*, have been heavily scrutinised for evidence of pagan practice, without much success. There is no reason, however, why there should have been a common origin in a geographically and politically divided prehistoric Sweden. The use of rhyme and alliteration in the Swedish law texts provide evidence that laws were read aloud, probably to illiterate folk,[34] but it does not necessarily follow that the laws themselves derive from

[30] Wiktorsson 1981, pp. 37–52.
[31] Sjöholm 1988 p. 269 and note 22.
[32] Utterström 1983 pp. 194–201.
[33] SLL 1, *Östgötalagen*, Inledning pp. XVI–XVII.
[34] The reading of Swedish laws aloud is mentioned in one papal letter, DS 131.

ancient oral custom, even if the style in which they were written does.[35] The compilers of the *landskapslagar* and their counterparts from other kingdoms were keen to emphasise that they built upon earlier laws, whether this was actually the case or not, and similar poetic form was used in law-codes elsewhere in Europe.[36] In Sweden old poetic forms may have enjoyed a revival during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[37] Hypothetical changes in the nature of the family from the Viking Period to the thirteenth century have also provided a foundation for some dubious theories. On the suspect basis that there was once a society in which women had more or less equal social standing to men, a supposed progressive reduction in the inheritance rights of women has been used to date Swedish law-texts, with the suggestion that *Gutalagen* is therefore the oldest, followed by *Västgötalagen* (VgL 1) and then *Dalalagen*.[38] Holmbäck even proposed that medieval Swedish law was on the road to equal inheritance rights between men and women before Birger Jarl reversed the trend.[39]

As early as 1934 such views were challenged by Per Nyström, and more recently by Sjöholm, who have argued that the medieval Swedish law codes were derived wholly from the European Romano-Christian tradition as represented in Roman law, Byzantine law and the *leges barbarorum*,[40] themselves heavily influenced by biblical models.[41] However, the main vehicle for the dissemination of Roman law was Justinian's codification, the *Code*, *Digest*, *Institutes* and *Novels*.[42] Before

[35] SLL 1, *Östgötalagen*, Inledning, p. XVII.
[36] See, for instance, Erhardt 1981.
[37] Utterström 1978.
[38] Sjöholm 1988 pp. 44–45.
[39] Holmbäck 1919 p. 133 and note 1.
[40] The *Leges Barbarorum* usually include the *Edictus Rothari*, Liutprand's laws and the *Lex Visigothorum* (Alaric II's *Lex Romana Visigothorum* of 506 and its successor, the *Lex Visigothorum Recesvindiana* of 654. Despite its repeal in Spain in 654, the *LRV* remained influential in France). The relationship between these is difficult to disentangle. The oldest scripts are from the Carolingian period. The most important Lombard texts derive from the eleventh century. The *Lex Longobarda* is a systematisation of earlier Lombard laws, Frankish capitularies for Italy and later (eleventh-century) Byzantine law.
[41] Nyström 1975b pp. 62–81, and Sjöholm 1988.
[42] Theophilus, one of the compilers, also produced a larger version of the *Institutes* known as the *Paraphrase*. Subsequently works and commentaries were produced on all of these, and a later codification (the *Ecloga*) was produced in c. 740. In the reign of Basil I (867–86) the *Procheiron* was compiled to succeed the *Ecloga*, and then the sixty-book (so-called) *Basilica*.

the eleventh century the legal situation in western and central Europe was chaotic, with innumerable local laws (often referred to as personal law) functioning within each territory. Many of these were derived from Roman law, and they had sometimes been incorporated into law-codes in the early Middle Ages, but these were neither as extensive nor as systematic as those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which were devised by trained jurists. Before the twelfth century Roman law can have had only a minimal impact in Scandinavia. However, late in the eleventh century the so-called glossators, Irnerius and his school in Bologna, began the revival of Roman Law, under the influence of the rediscovered *Digest*, with their commentaries (glosses) on Justinianic law.

This *Lex Langobarda* became the western European *lex vulgaris* through the transmission of scholars who often served both Church and state.[43] In the mid-twelfth century, the Roman Church adopted a collection of council decisions, systematised legal cases and legal commentaries compiled by a monk from Bologna, named by him *Concordia discordantium canonum*, as the basis of its canon law. It was no doubt through the Church that the influence of Roman law was first felt in Sweden. Because it was developed by individual jurists during study or as need arose, assessment of the date and time-scale of any shift from whatever customary law existed in rural or peripheral areas to Roman-Lombard Law is extremely difficult. Sjöholm has demonstrated at great length the similarities between Scandinavian law, Lombard law and Mosaic law. As she and Nyström both noted, the influence of Mosaic law is evident in the opening passage of *Upplandslagen*, in which Birger Magnusson is equated with Moses as lawgiver.[44] In matters such as marital law, which the Church controlled through its canon law, a progression through Roman and Lombard law to Scandinavian laws is probable, but it cannot be shown that all Swedish laws were based entirely on Roman and Lombard law, particularly as we have so little evidence for customary law in Sweden before the fourteenth century. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that all the procedures in Mosaic or Lombard law were entirely alien to 'Germanic' customary law. Whether the intermittent rebellions of

[43] It was thought by many thirteenth and fourteenth-century jurists to be inferior to Roman law, not least because it contained the bulk of law that concerned the standing of women.

[44] Nyström 1975b p. 75.

thirteenth-century Sweden were partly provoked by the introduction of laws that had little or no connection with existing custom will remain a matter for speculation.

By the time the first extant law-codes were compiled in Sweden, in the late thirteenth century, scholars had flocked to schools in Paris and Italy from all over Europe and returned to their homelands to serve in both ecclesiastical and secular administrations. Magnus Ladulås's advisors Bishop Brynolf Algotsson and Anders Adreae were two who had served such an apprenticeship. During the thirteenth century the process of law also underwent change throughout Christian Europe. Alongside Christianity a system governed by the use of oaths and ordeal, which rested on a belief in the occurrence of miracles and magic and the belief that God would judge those who were guilty or innocent, was replaced by one based on the production of witnesses. A number of scholars have tried to demonstrate that trial by ordeal had a pagan origin, but the evidence that such practices were employed in pre-Christian Scandinavia is non-existent.[45] Referring to the use of ordeal, Saxo mentions its introduction into Denmark for the settling of 'various cases', in place of what probably had been a practice in the pagan period, that of duelling.[46]

Legal procedure continued to be dependent on the swearing of oaths, but use of the ordeal was suppressed during the thirteenth century. It had in any case been a last (but not necessarily infrequent) resort, used in cases where there was no other method of determining guilt or innocence.[47] Opposition to ordeal had increased both within and outside the Church, not because the system of ordeal and oaths was associated with pagan practice, but because an alternative appeared with the growth of inquisitorial methods and use of witnesses, perhaps under the influence of Roman law. Pope Alexander III expressed his opposition to the practice of putting clerics to the ordeal in the strongest possible terms in a letter of 1171–72, addressed to the

[45] Holmbäck and Wessén, for instance, tried to demonstrate that ordeal by iron was of heathen origin, but their argument does not stand up to scrutiny: SLL 5, *Äldre Västgötalagen*, Inledning, p. XXXI. The fact that ordeal as a means of proof can be traced back to ancient Mesopotamia can be used either to suggest that it was present in pagan societies and that it was very widespread, or, as Sjöholm uses it, to indicate that it derived from the Near East and came to Europe via Mosaic law. There is no evidence for its use in pagan northern Europe.

[46] Saxo 10:11, p. 21.

[47] See Bartlett 1986.

Archbishop of Uppsala and Swedish bishops.[48] The summary of Skåne law made by Andreas Sunesen (archbishop of Lund) provides one explanation for the change, the widespread abuse of the system of ordeal. The *nämnd* (jury), it explains, prevents fraud.[49] The inquisitorial method relied on the extraction of a confession, and had advantages for both state and Church, as it gave an opportunity to control the proceedings through an appointed judge and raised finance in the form of fines payable to those who participated in the process. In Denmark trial by ordeal was abolished in the early thirteenth century, and replaced with a form of court, the *nämnd*.[50] According to *Östgötalagen* Birger Jarl abolished ordeal by iron in Östergötland.[51] This conforms with the general pattern of change within Europe, peripheral areas following last. As Bartlett observed, Sweden was probably only just getting used to the practice of ordeal when it was abolished.[52]

Just as inquisition replaced trial by ordeal, so another change was taking place in thirteenth-century Sweden. Two distinct judicial processes are evident in Swedish medieval law, the *edgärdsman* and the *nämnd*, although both were governed by the giving of oaths by the respective parties (the *edgärdsmän* being one if this process was followed), the number giving oaths varying according the crime.[53] The two processes are most clearly differentiated in *Östgötalagen*, in which the bishop exercised control over the *edgärdsman* process. Whether all crimes were initially dealt with through the *edgärdsman* process is unclear, but all oaths were subject to inquiry,[54] and any case in which they were challenged was handled by the bishop's *nämnd*.[55] An accused person could defend himself if he could not find the required number of *edgärdsmän* or an opinion on the proof needed. In this case a judgement could be given by *vitsord*, the judgement being given through an oath by an *edgärdsman* and the accused, who could then go free. This procedure neither served justice nor provided

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[48] DS 70.

[49] SSGL 9, p. 425: *Iuris Scanici exposition latine conscripta ab Andrea Sunonis F. archiepiscopo Lundensis.*

[50] Valdemar II's statute of 1216 provided for the accuser in cases of theft or injury to nominate fifteen men, and the accused to choose twelve of them to make up the court: Kong Valdemar den Anders Jyske lov [ed. Petersen], JL 12117.

[51] ÖgL E.17.

[52] Bartlett 1986 p. 133.

[53] The number giving oaths on behalf of plaintiff or accused was usually six.

[54] ÖgL, Kk 15:2, R 15, 16:1.

[55] ÖgL, Kk 16:3.

income for the courts, which suited neither the Church nor the crown.[56] Although the Church had a considerable say in justice in *Östgötalagan*, the king maintained control over most of the judicial process, since the majority of cases, particularly those incurring serious penalties, went to the *häradsnämnd* or *fjärdingsnämnd*. Furthermore, ultimate appeal when a case remained undecided was to the Ljongating.[57] As in Svealand, the process to be followed in a given case was determined by the *domare*, who also decided which party had to prove its case.[58]

Legal processes took place at the *ting*. This institution existed in the administrative *härader* of Denmark, parts of Norway and Götaland, and the equivalent *hundare* in Svealand.[59] By the era of the *landskapslagar* the *ting* was used for tax collection and the raising of military forces but also functioned as a judicial organ. As an assembly of the *härad* or *hundare* it may have had a part in ecclesiastical organisation, at least in some regions. In *Östgötalagen* the local *ting*, the *målting*, has no obvious ties to territorial administration.[60] By the time the extant law-codes were written down, the functioning of the *ting* included much Christian ritual. *Ting* were called at regular intervals, but their operation varied in different regions of Sweden. In the law codes of Götaland the bishop supervised the local *ting*, as in the Danish *Sjællandslagen*. According to *Östgötalagen* the bishop visited each parish once every three years to oversee the courts, otherwise they were supervised by the priests.[61] A *landsting*, Ljongating, acted as the last resort.[62] The desire of the Church to exercise control over justice is expressed in numerous documents.[63] This was acceded to in a letter of King Sverker Karlsson, written in 1200.[64] Similarly Erik Eriksson conceded or confirmed the rights of bishops to judge in religious

[56] The *vitsord* is objected to on grounds that criminals could go free in a letter of 1218 from Pope Honorius III to the Archbishop of Lund: DS 176.
[57] ÖgL, Kk 16:2.
[58] ÖgL, R 22.
[59] An exception in Svealand was Roden, where there was a *ting* in every *skeppslag*: UL R 13.
[60] ÖgL D 3, V 20, Ä 14.
[61] ÖgL, Kk 13:1.
[62] For instance, see ÖgL, J 12:1, 13:1 for cases of land disputes. Ljongating is probably identical to the *lagting*. See ÖgL R 21–26, ÖgL, Ä 4, DS 4492. See also SLL 1, Inledning, p. XXVIII.
[63] For instance, DS 853.
[64] DS 115.

and family matters, and also perjury cases.[65] This was confirmed by Magnus Ladulås.[66]

Other courts, and all those in Svealand, were supervised by a *domare*.[67] Since these judges were chosen by the king or *lagman*,[68] the king exercised indirect control over the processes of law.[69] If a case was not resolved at the local *ting* it might go to a regional *ting*, probably supervised by the *lagman*.[70] Once their laws were codified, the old settlement regions of Västergötland, Östergötland, Västmanland, Attundaland and Tiundaland all had *lagmän* and a regional *ting*, which probably existed throughout the thirteenth century, perhaps the twelfth as well. Uppland itself had a *lagman* in *Upplandslagen*, a situation that may have been created only in 1296. No *landsting* for Uppland is mentioned in *Upplandslagen*, although there are references to the king's judgement. If Uppland as a judicial and administrative entity only came into being at this time, this might explain the omission, but not all laws and regulations that appear in other documents can be attested in the *landskapslagar*. The *nämnd* commission that codified the law was itself a *landskap*-wide assembly of leading nobles, and other similar assemblies may have been convened for other purposes.

There may have been less need for a *ting* that convened regularly in Uppland than in other *landskap*, since Attundaland and Tiundaland retained their *folklandsting* and *lagmän* after the codification of *Upplandslagen*. There are problems, however, identifying a regional *ting* in the smallest Uppland *folkland*, Fjädrundaland. Still more unlikely is the apparent absence of any *landsting* in *Södermannalagen*, although the law code's existence and the known earlier existence of the region as a named entity presuppose the convening of some sort of regional assembly, even if only occasionally. A Södermanland *lagman* first appears in written sources in 1285.[71] A *folklandsnämnd* of twelve men, presumably chosen from the various *hundare* in the same way that *nämnden* were chosen from lesser districts, is also mentioned, and Magnus Eriksson referred to a 'folklandzthing' in 1345, before the

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[65] DS 215.
[66] DS 690.
[67] UL, R 5:6. Each Götaland *målting* had one *domare*, the *skiljeman*, whereas the Svealand *ting* had two, probably working alternately. See ÖgL, R 22.
[68] UL, R 1.
[69] See UL 1, 2, 14, SdmL R 1–3, 8, 11.
[70] UL Kk 20, R 7, R 10.
[71] *Bero Legifer*, in DS 811.

landslag appeared.[72] This *nämnd* might have been assembled in the same way as that of *Dalalagen*, gathered from the *hundaresting*. In *Västmannalagen* a *folklandssynenämnd* is referred to in a similar sense to the *folklandsting* elsewhere in the same law code.[73] An assembly of this (*folklandssyn*) nature was also called in Fjädrundaland,[74] and a source of 1329 appears to refer to a council of *domare* belonging to the same *folkland*, possibly the same *nämnd*.[75]

The probability that a regional judicial assembly existed in all *landskap* is reinforced by the link between market days when *frid* was given, which are referred to in *Södermannalagen*, and *ting* days.[76] In *Heimskringla* Snorri refers to a market of the *svear* and 'þing allra svía', the *ting* of all the *svear*. Assuming that he did not simply invent this is a parallel to a *göta landsting*, of which he may have been aware from his visit to Eskil *Lagman* in 1219, he was either confused or meant something other than a *ting* assembly drawn from all Sviþjoð.[77] One possibility is that he was referring to a special *ting* held in all Svealand regions at a given time, rather than in a single place. In this case the most likely event would be the Candlemass *ting* (*kyndilþing*), alternatively named *disaþing* in *Upplandslagen*, also the time when the *ledung* was called out.[78] In addition *Upplandslagen* mentions a 'köpting' in connection with *disaþing* and its *frider*.[79] *Södermannalagen* too mentions *köpþingafriþer* at Strängnäs, between the first Sunday of a fast and the following Wednesday (*hvita sunnudagh* and *ascu oþinsdagh*).[80] It is less clear in this case whether it refers to a regular market day, such as those referred to in the privileges granted to certain towns in the

[72] SdmL Add. 6, and DS 3891.
[73] VmL, M 33, preface, and B 17:3.
[74] UL, V 17:4.
[75] DS 2723, . . . *in communi pretorio nostre folklandie*.
[76] SdmL þ 11.
[77] SSH 1, *Ólafs saga helga* 77, p. 327.
[78] The use of the plural form *kyndilþingum* led some early scholars to assume that this referred to regular weekly markets and *ting*, but there was only one Candlemass in the year. There is no doubt that *kyndilþing* was Candlemass, as it also referred to sometimes as *kyndilmæsso tyngom* in some of the manuscripts. The Candlemass *ting*-market is referred to in several other documents, the earliest being one of 1298 concerning a Karl Erlandsson's testament of a *gård* in 'bierghar in færingøum' (Kungsberga in Färentuna), to be transferred 'in nundibus dictis Kyndelthing' (DS 1223). The testament itself, made in 1296, is DS 1167. See Chapter 7:1 for the *ledung* and its organisation.
[79] UL þ 13:pr.: *Disæþinx friþær. gangær in a disæþinx dagh. ok standær twæggiæ kiöpþingæ mællum*.
[80] SdmL þ 11, Preface.

early fourteenth century, or a day similar to the *disaþing* of *Upplandslagen*, but the reference to the fast makes the latter very possible, and *hvita sunnudagh* in Strängnäs was also the day when the *ledung* was supposed to be ready.[81] If this is so, Snorri's statement that the market 'stóð viku' presumably refers to the period between the two times (days) mentioned in the *Þingmalabalk* of *Upplandslagen*, when the *disating frider* applied. Arngrim says this *ting* was held *in februario* and Snorri *at gói*, the second month after midwinter, both of which could mean Candlemass, 2 February in the Christian calendar.[82] The Icelandic writers were not necessarily saying, of course, that Candlemass was the only regional *ting*, but that it was the most important.

The origin of the *lagman* (rendered *legifer* in Latin), like that of the *ting*, is lost in obscurity. Through his involvement with the *landsting*, also the body that formally accepted a new king, the *lagman* played a key part in the process of king's installation.[83] There are numerous references to *lagmän* from the early thirteenth century onwards, and the *Västgötalagen lagman* list, albeit composed in the fourteenth century, suggests that they existed before 1130, beginning with the pagan Lum, 'because he is said to have thought up and made a great part of our law'. Lum corresponds to the mythical Viger in the preface to *Upplandslagen*, who could be described as Uppland's first *lagman*; whether Uppland existed as an administrative entity in pagan times is doubtful. Evidently not all *västgöta lagmän* were as clever or just as Lum and Eskil Magnusson; Kring-Alle, Tubbe and Ulvar of Trälje being among the miscreants.[84]

In both the *Early Västgötalagen* and the *landslag* it is stipulated that the *lagman* should be the son of a *bonde*, which led some early historians to conclude that he was a representative of the common free landholder, but the word *bonde* did not necessarily imply a small freeholder in the Middle Ages.[85] Emilsson suggests that in the law codes the word might be interpreted as 'inhabitant' or 'native' of the *land*

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[81] SdmL, Add. 2.

[82] It should be mentioned that there is considerable argument about calendars and the dates of the pre-Christian months: see, for instance, Hjärne 1952 pp. 156–58.

[83] See Chapter 5:2.

[84] VgL, 4:14.

[85] The three-time elected king of Sweden in the fifteenth century, Karl Knutsson, belonged to a family named 'Bonde', which suggests that it had no negative implication for the upper nobility even then.

in question.[86] Leaving aside Snorri's tale of Torgny, which may be part-myth, or partly his own invention based on his Icelandic experience, the *lagmän* of the extant (thirteenth-century) Swedish sources, and probably earlier, were chosen from among the highest nobility.[87] In some cases the office passed from father to son. In Västergötland Folke Algotsson succeeded his father Algot Brynolfsson in 1288, and Bengt Magnusson, *lagman* of Östergötland, seems to have followed his father Magnus Bengtsson c. 1263. Both families had close ties with the king in this period.[88] It is possible that the Algotsson family could trace their origins to a family of earlier *lagmän* that preceded Eskil Magnusson, the *Edsväraslä*kt. According to the *Västgötalagen lagman* list, Karle of Edsvära was succeeded by his son Algot Karlesson, who was in turn succeeded by his son Sigtrygg Algotsson, who was followed by his son Algot Sigtryggsson. Karle of Edsvära is credited with the rejection of the prospective king Ragnvald Knaphövde when he arrived at the *landsting* after his election in Svealand—by this action, if the tale is correct, he clearly demonstrated the rights of the local nobility. *Lagmän* of this period might well have represented local noble interests against those of the king, but those that are known from late thirteenth century sources had strong links to the Folkung dynasty.

Before laws were written down the *lagman's* tasks no doubt included memorisation of the laws, and even after this their recitation at assemblies. A papal letter of 1206 implies that this recitation took place annually.[89] Besides administering justice the *lagman* had the ultimate

[86] Emilsson 2005 p. 230. Emilsson also says that if this was the case, the appointment of Eskil Magnusson as *lagman* of Västergötland had already broken this rule in the early thirteenth century. It is not certain that the *Folkungaätten* were an 'Östergötland family' (as opposed to a 'Närke' or 'Rekarne' family), as he states elsewhere, but there is certainly little evidence that they held land in Västergötland. On the other hand, this is not impossible, and even one *gård* may have been interpreted as sufficient. His appointment may also have had a link with his marriage to Kristine, whose family might have owned land there.

[87] See Emilsson 2005, pp. 222–25, table 10 and notes 408–14. Gillingstam also argued that indigenous names were evidence of lower social background, but the evidence on this is inconclusive—as Emilsson observes, the 'new' (twelfth/thirteenth-century) names of European origin are almost all saints' names, and therefore reflect the influence of the Church (pp. 225–27). Many upper nobility in this period also had indigenous names.

[88] Magnus Bengtsson was the son of Bishop Bengt Magnusson of the *Folkungaätten*—he and his descendants are known as the *Folkungaättens lagmansgren* ('Folkung family's *lagman* branch').

[89] DS 131.

responsibility for their interpretation where necessary, and for steering any necessary revision or addition to the laws, probably what Snorri means when he says, referring to the Swedish *lagman*, 'the law shall be that, which he decides to read (out)', rather than that he had absolute power to determine the law.[90] *Lagmän* played the major part in the commission which produced *Upplandslagen* in the 1290s, led by the *lagman* of Tiundaland, Birger Petersson. Both Snorri and Arngrim imply that the *lagman* of Tiundaland had an authority above others in the realm, but if this had any reality beyond a possible moral authority there is no other evidence for it.

As the *ting* appears in the *landskapslagar*, it functioned primarily as a judicial assembly, in all regions and at all levels. Fines were imposed for a variety of breaches of regulations, including failure to turn up at the *ting* (incumbent on all *bönder* and *landbor*), and often failure to resolve a case. The *domare* determined what proof was appropriate for any crime dealt with, and may also have given judgement when a party gave its oath or a *nämnd* made judgement. In the law codes of Svealand there is no identifiable separation between bishop's *nämnd* and *hundaresnämnd*. As a consequence priests had no special rights in judicial matters, but Church and king worked together with the *nämnd*, although the king's men controlled the courts of appeal.[91]

Oath could not stand against oath in the *edgärdsman* process, and such cases went to the *nämnd*—so did all cases in which an oath had been deemed unlawful.[92] Many cases that had originally been taken to the *edgärdsman* ended up in the king's *nämnder*, usually by choice of king or *lagman*, who could declare a process invalid.[93] Holmbäck

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[90] SSH 1, *Ólafs saga helga* 77, p. 327: *Yfir hverjum lögum er lögmaður og ræður hann mestu við bændur því að það skulu lög vera er hann ræður upp að kveða*. Schlyter interpreted this as meaning that the *lagman* alone could determine the law: see N. Beckman 1918 p. 280. Hjärne pointed out that if the *lagman* had absolute power to change the law, as some earlier scholars had interpreted this passage, it would have flown in the face of everything else known about medieval Scandinavian law; see Hjärne 1952 p. 179.

[91] UL, Kk 22, Ä 16:2.

[92] See ÖgL, R 2 and 16:1, E 11 and 12, J 15:2.

[93] For instance, see ÖgL, R 2, E 23. ÖgL, Kk 18, R 16 give examples of processes that might be declared invalid. Sometimes an *edgärdsman* case might go to *nämnd* by the choice of one or other party involved in a case—for instance, a defendant could go to the *häradsnämnd* if no oath could be sworn on his behalf. However, it was less easy for plaintiffs to choose to take their case to *nämnd* when the *edgärdsman* process was available, since this could result in heavier punishment should they fail: ÖgL, E 17.

and Wessén argued that this may have been used as an instrument by successive kings to introduce death instead of fines as a punishment for certain crimes, as a method of removing opposition.[94] In *Upplandslagan* and *Södermannalagen* there is no clear separation between *edgärdsman* and *nämnd* processes. The *nämnd* was supervised by six men in the king's service or a *länsman*. If they failed to give a judgement all involved were fined, resulting in the formation of another *nämnd*.[95] Usually the *nämnd* comprised twelve men.[96] Some cases, in which the *vitsord* (the initial judgement which had to be disproved) lay on one side, could be dealt with by the *edgärdsman* process or with *nämnd*.[97] It is likely that, as in *Östgötalagen*, use of the *nämnd* increasingly dominated the judicial process at the expense of the *edgärdsman*, a process that probably began in the thirteenth century. This had obvious advantages for the crown, whose influence is evident in various sections of the law codes.[98] In *Upplandslagen* proof through witnesses dominates procedures. A certain number of free or freeborn men had to give oaths on behalf of the accused.[99] The emphasis was on proving innocence, rather than proving guilt: if the plaintiff could not bring witnesses the accused had to give an oath to the *edgärdsman* under the rules for *edgängsmål* in order to free himself, backed by oath-helpers which he had chosen.[100] Sjöholm argues that this right is evidence of the bargaining power of the Uppland nobility at the time the extant law-code was written down. Property and life were certainly protected more than in other law codes—no-one who could pay a fine could be physically punished, and the maximum fine for those seeking to purchase the king's peace was forty marks. *Södermannalagen* is marginally less favourable to the accused, but the requirement for witnesses and oaths on the side of both plaintiff and

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[94] SLL 1, *Upplandslagen*, Inledning p. XXXV.

[95] UL, R 9:1.

[96] In certain cases, such as disputes over children born outside wedlock or possession of land, the number could be six: UL, J 15 and 16.

[97] UL, R 9, B 29:1.

[98] For instance, UL, Kg 9:1.

[99] UL, R 9:4. R 11 emphasises that women were excluded. An oath-giver for the accused is often referred to as *löftesman*. Twelve witnesses are referred to in M 11:6, 2 and Kk 15:6. The usual procedure was for each party to bring twelve men, the opposing party having the right to exclude six: UL, Ä 23, J 15:1 and 19. SdmL: the accused chose half the number nominated by the plaintiff, in the case of *edsöre* crimes from the *häradsnämnd*.

[100] UL, M 19:2, B 15.

accused still places the latter in a much more favourable position than he would have been in *Östgötalagen*. Besides having a greater number of *urbota* crimes, *edsöre* cases were determined by investigation by the agents of the crown. Fines were also distributed in a manner more favourable to crown or Church.

The free landowning *bönder* and the rent-paying peasants, the *landbor*, are the most numerous tax-paying groups in the *landskapslagar*. It is clear from the above that they provided numerous opportunities for the raising of finance by the authorities, since fines were imposed not only for the perpetration of crimes, but for a variety of failures to carry out duties. In cases of serious *urbota* crimes those adjudged as guilty had to buy their peace with the king with part of their property, or in extreme cases might lose all they possessed. The level of fines in these cases clearly apply to large landowners, not ordinary *bönder*. It is noticeable that *edsöre* crimes, serious crimes that carried heavy penalties, were tried exclusively by *nämnd* in all the extant texts.[101] Holmbäck and Wessén argued that there was a steady increase in royal control over judgements that yielded high penalties.[102] Only crimes punishable with less than the forty mark fine were outside the king's judgement (*konungsräfst*), and the highest courts were controlled by the king or his men, even in *Östgötalagen* and *Västmannalagen*, in which the Church had greater power.

Records of specific legislation by kings or their agents are very poor. *Erikskrönikan* tells us that Birger Jarl took the opportunity presented by his son Valdemar's marriage to Sofie of Denmark to introduce a new law giving brother and sister equal right of inheritance.[103] No other source suggests that Birger Jarl legislated on inheritance, and there is good reason to doubt the tale. The law by which a sister inherits a third just as her brother does is referred to as part of 'the new law' in a fourteenth-century document, which normally refers to Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*.[104] Furthermore, brother is given precedence over sister in *Västgötalagen*, the first extant version of which was written some forty years after Valdemar's wedding, and this

[101] See, for instance, ÖgL E 12.
[102] SLL 1, Inledning, p. XXXVI.
[103] Ek p. 42.
[104] DS 5043. See also Sjöholm 1988 pp. 128–29. She suggests that the author of *Erikskrönikan* has confused this with Birger Jarl's probable measures to legitimate the succession of his son.

corresponds with its version of Magnus Ladulås's law on *gästning*.[105] It is nevertheless possible that 'Birger Jarl's inheritance law' existed before the fourteenth century in the form of customary practice.

The assumption that Birger Jarl was an important legislator rests on a premise that he was the most powerful ruler in thirteenth-century Sweden. It has been argued that because the regulations favourable to the nobility appeared after the meeting at Alsnö (1285), prior to this the powers of the crown with regard to *edsöre* cases were as strong throughout Sweden as they were in *Östgötalagen* and in Norway and Denmark. In other words, Birger Jarl and his son Valdemar had the same power to use the law to weaken political opposition as the rulers of neighbouring states, but these powers were eroded in a period when the nobility was in a strong position. This is certainly possible, as we have no record of any serious opposition to Birger Jarl after the defeat of the *folkungar* in 1251, whereas his sons and grandsons fought among themselves for the kingdom. The rival claimants needed support, and may have been forced to make concessions in return for it. The evidence we possess indicates that the law evolved throughout the thirteenth century, but with considerable regional variations. To judge by the law-texts of the fourteenth century, the power of the king relative to the Church was weakest in Östergotland, where Birger Jarl's own estate lay.

Whereas Nyström saw the *landskapslagar* as a clear reflection of the 'feudal' nobility's interests, Sjöholm sees the development of Swedish law in terms of the investiture contest, a three-way struggle between church, king and nobility, but the main conflict in Sweden during the thirteenth century was between king and nobility in Svealand. It may be that the apparent coincidence of interests between Church and state as it appears in *Upplandslagen* is a reflection of the fact that both king and Church were establishing their power in Svealand at the same time, whereas the Church established itself earlier in Västergötland and Östergötland. It should be borne in mind that it was established with the help and finance of the nobility, which therefore exercised considerable control over the local priesthood.[106] The most powerful of the Götaland nobility, the *Folkungaätten*, were able to control the bishopric of Linköping in the early thirteenth century. The relative weakness of the king in *Upplandslagen* may well be

[105] VgL A 2.
[106] See Chapter 11:1 on this subject.

a reflection of long term differences between that region and Götaland. Just as Uppland was the last region to be Christianised, so continental influences in other areas were slower to reach it.

Sjöholm argues that the number of *urbota* crimes in a given law code must reflect the power of the state at the time when it was written down, since their enforcement provided the state with the opportunity to remove or weaken political opposition. She herself points out that a given balance of power between king and nobility may exist for only a decade or two; in fact it could change much more quickly than that. Because of textual and dating difficulties and considerable regional variations in custom and power structures, it is impossible to draw conclusions from the law texts about changes in relative power of crown or nobility over any period of time.[107] Records of acts of legislation are few in the thirteenth century, and evidence that Birger Jarl was a legislator derives largely from *Östgötalagen*, which contains several references to this.[108] Because of his secure position after 1252, many have assumed that he introduced the *edsöre* laws into Svealand.[109]

While it is undeniable that some statutes of *Upplandslagen* favour the nobility, and that the existing law text dates to a period in which the authority of the king was weak, Sjöholm's contention that the laws demonstrate this and can be used to give an indication of the relative power of king, clergy and secular nobility at a given time is dubious. Only where there are comparable texts from the same region can any development be traced. Unfortunately our knowledge of the late thirteenth century, and of the origin of the Alsnö statute (or statutes), is poor. At the time of his election the king had to confirm the *edsöresbrotten* (laws concerning breaches of the king's peace) by oath. It was at this time that the laws might be adjusted to the advantage of one party or another depending on their relative standing. However, it is impossible to determine whether the prior enmity condition predates the extant texts of *Östgötalagen* and Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*. These law codes do not include the stipulation of prior enmity for crimes committed in church, and include more *urbota* crimes in general.

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[107] Sjöholm 1988. By 'power structure' Sjöholm means the relative standing of king, nobility and Church in the imposition of the law, which she believes gives an indication of power to govern.

[108] ÖgL, E 17, D 3.3, 14: Pr, V 6:5, R 3:2.

[109] For instance, Nordberg 1995 p. 107.

Another question raised by the Alsnö statute is that of *gårdsrätter*.[110] The statute regulates for retinue and servants in the king's own *gårdar*, but does not address the possible granting of judicial rights to nobility who served the king within *gårdar* or castles administered by them. Bergqvist argued that such rights existed only in a few *gårdar* in the seventeenth century because they fell out of use (for some unexplained reason) in c. 1500, as evidenced by the lack of regulations on this matter in sixteenth-century statutes.[111] The owners of only one of the three *gårdar* used for his evidence (Ängsö) were advisors to the king at the end of the thirteenth century, the others not before the fifteenth century, which makes them poor evidence for such an early origin to their privileges. Bergqvist's theory was attacked by Lars-Olof Larsson, who criticised his handling of the sources, pointing out that the manuscripts concerning *gårdsrätter* cannot be dated earlier than the 1430s, and that the regulations allowed for the possibility of their existence, rather than telling us that they were actually employed.[112] Nevertheless, *gårdsrätter* are known to have been used in the late fourteenth century, and Bo Jonsson, as the king's servant, was given power of judgement in all the king's *gårdar* and castles (*hwss*) by Albrecht of Mecklenburg in 1369. In this case the king was delegating judicial powers that he himself was not in a position to enforce. There is a possibility that such *gårdsrätter* might have been granted earlier, but there is no evidence for this. Nor do the extant versions of the Alsnö statute give a clear indication that this was contemplated.

Swedish kings and their agents did not have to contend with baronial or manorial courts, as the kings of England and France did, but they ruled a number of distinct regions with their own legal traditions, which many of their people may have guarded jealously. Because of the paucity of written sources, we know nothing about the attitude of the majority of freemen in Sweden. The influence of upper nobility and crown on the *landskapslagar* may have been exaggerated by some scholars who wish to argue that they were almost wholly derived from the Roman-Lombard tradition. It is clear that a group of nobles supervised the compilation of *Upplandslagen* in the

[110] *Gårdsrätter* may be roughly transalated as 'manorial law'.
[111] Ferm 1983. Ferm examines the arguments of both Bergqvist and Larsson.
[112] L.-O. Larsson 1975 pp. 49–67.

name of the king, but less certain who was behind the compilation of the other law-codes. As Nyström pointed out, large sections of the Swedish law codes are concerned with taxes and dues paid by both freemen and tenants to magnates and king as well as land ownership. Besides following a general European trend, the impulse behind the creation of written law-codes may well have been to rationalise a set of new tributes and new social circumstances, in which lordship had become territorialized, land area was measured and peasant holdings were more regulated. The *landskapslagar* are unlikely to have been a conscious effort to enforce new measures that did not previously exist—as will be seen, many of the changes are known to have begun before the appearance of the law books, and there are also some laws in them that acted against the interests of magnates or Church, such as the right of kin to prevent the sale of land outside the family. Nevertheless, in many ways changes favoured royal authority. The ending of the ordeal, the subordinating of the *edgårdsman* process to that of the *nämnd*, the existence of appeal courts, an increase in royal control over cases that yielded heavy fines—all these assisted the king.

CHAPTER FIVE

KINGS AND KING'S MEN

5.1. *Sweden's Jarls*

The *landskapslagar* of Svealand mention only one jarl, generally assumed to be the successor to the 'jarl of the *svear* and *götar* (or *gutar*)' addressed in several papal letters after the mid-twelfth century. The difficulty is that the rights referred to in the law-texts may have belonged only to the jarl's successor, the *hertig*, at the end of the century, while other regulations in them appear to have been out of date by the time they were codified. Both jarl and *hertig* were referred to as *dux* in Latin, and since 1250 they had been members of the ruling family, first King Valdemar's father, Birger Magnusson, then the king's eldest brother or son. Most modern scholars assume that prior to the accession of Valdemar Birgersson in 1250 the position of jarl of the realm had been held by only one person who, unlike the *hertig*, was not a close relative of the king, and whose military powers extended to the whole realm.

In the same way that the *duces* in the reigns of Magnus Ladulås and Birger Magnusson were not direct inheritors of Birger Jarl's position, the thirteenth-century *dux sweorum et guttorum* clearly differed from jarls who were chieftains or magnates of the Viking Period such as Håkon Jarl Sigurdson of Norway (c. 940–995). Tracing the origin of the Swedish jarls is not easy; not only are there few sources, but those which mention the title 'jarl' or its Latin equivalents *dux* or *comes* have different origins. Icelandic-Norwegian and Götaland sources, which tell of Karl Sunesson, may have had a different understanding of the title than Swedish monastic sources (whence our knowledge of Ulf *comes*) or Saxo, or the Pope. The earliest of the extant Scandinavian histories, Saxo's, dates to the end of the twelfth century, and was obviously written from a Danish perspective.

The first to be mentioned in written sources as *dux sweorum et guttorum* or *dux sweorum* is Birger Brosa, several times in letters which

cannot be precisely dated but which belong to the late twelfth century.[1] Whether *guttorum* refers to the *gutar* of Gotland or the *götar* is uncertain. If this title indeed refers to a *dux* with responsibility for defence of the coast, it is quite possible that *gutar* were included, since, although the king of Sweden had limited authority there, Gotland was included in the *ledung* levy in a way that Götaland was not.[2] This in turn would allow for the possible simultaneous existence of a *dux gothiæ*, discussed below. Various scholars have sought the origin of the 'jarl of the *svear* and *götar/gutar*' much earlier, but the fact that the title *dux* or *jarl* existed then does not mean that such persons held a similar position to Birger Brosa.[3] A number of other twelfth-century people are referred to as jarl, *comes* or *dux* in the sources: Karl Sunesson, 'Jon' (probably Johan Sverkersson), Magnus Henriksen's brother Ragnvald, Ulf and Guttorm. All were presumably territorial magnates, but were they also jarls of the *svear* and *götar/gutar*, with many of the powers listed as the jarl's or *hertig's* in *landskapslagar*, some of which clearly indicate a function related to the *ledung* fleet?

A major difficulty with papal letters addressing a *dux* or *comes*, which form a large part of the written evidence for Sweden in the twelfth century, is the use of the terms *Suecia* and *Gothia*, and their genitives *suecie/swearum/suetorum*, *gothorum*. It is likely that the Pope made careful use of these different regions and titles when sending letters, rather than choosing them at random to refer to Sweden in general and its rulers. Adolf Schück demonstrated that the Pope recognised *Suecia* and *Gothia* as separate entities, as in Alexander III's letters of 1171, qualifying 'tam in Svetia quam in Gothia' and addressing 'regna Danorum, Norwegiensium, Suetorum et Gothorum'.[4] Both he and Jaakkola argued that where there is an extant letter concerning the Church in Sweden addressed to only one of these regions there must have been a corresponding one to the other. This is quite

[1] The first title occurs in DS 70 and DS 116, the second in DS 823, DS 824, DS 839 (in this case *ducis svetiæ*) and ST 1:50.

[2] See chapter 7:2.

[3] The exact date is unknown, and many of the documents relating to his activities are undated. In 1198, just after Knut Eriksson had died, the Pope sent two copies of a letter, one to the new king Sverker, the other to *comes suetiae*, Sweden's jarl (Birger Brosa): DS 107.

[4] ST 1, 47 and 48. See A. Schück, 'Från Viby till Bjälbo', pp. 206–08.

likely, but it is another matter to assume that successive popes had a good grasp of Swedish geography, and allowance must be made for misunderstanding or possible lack of knowledge of the political situation in Sweden at the time when they were penned. As noted in Chapter 1, there are considerable difficulties in determining what the term Svitjod-Svealand referred to, let alone what the Pope understood by it, and 'Gothia' may also have included regions settled from Götaland and subject to the laws of either Västergötland or Östergötland, such as Småland or Dal.

One of the sources for Swedish twelfth-century history, Saxo's *Gesta Danorum*, is quite inconsistent in its use of terminology; for instance, at various points Birger Brosa is called 'Suetiæ duce', 'Suetiæ satrapa' and 'Præfectum Gothiæ'.[5] As in the case of Papal letters, it is difficult to establish any particular reason for this inconsistency, apart from a general rule that Birger is more likely to be referred to as *gothiæ* when a reference or letter refers specifically to Götaland or Östergötland. Clearly the terminology does not always imply that the *dux* was an extensive landholder in the area in question, as Birger is *dux sweorum* and both he and Karl Döve are both 'ducis sveorum' on their seals, although the majority of their identified landholdings lay further south.[6] From the time of Birger Brosa onwards there are good reasons to think that the title *Dux sweorum et guttorum* meant something other than a jarl who had extensive landholdings in both regions, having become the honorary title of a king's administrator with joint responsibility for the Swedish *ledung* fleet and coastal watch. It will be argued later that this was most likely introduced in the form in which it appears in the *landskapslagar* in the late twelfth century.

There seems little reason to doubt that Karl Sunesson was a territorial magnate in Västergötland in the 1130s. He is recorded as 'king' in the 1268 treaty with Harald Gille, jarl of Västergötland in *Heimskringla* and is probably identical to the *lagman* Karl of Edsvära in the *Västgötalagen lagman* list.[7] The next person to appear in extant sources as a jarl in Sweden is Ragnvald, brother of Magnus Henriksen, the short-lived king of 1160–61. For this we have only one source,

[5] Saxo 11:14, p. 86; 16:1, p. 604 and 14:32, p. 556 respectively.
[6] ST 1, 50.
[7] See N. Beckman 1912 p. 16, and SSH 2, *Saga Inga konungs og bræðra hans* 2, p. 767.

Heimskringla, which says he was jarl when his brother was king. The reference occurs in the context of the flight of Orm after King Inge's defeat, and is an aside by Snorri, who is more interested in the affairs of Norway. Whether Ragnvald's jarldom was awarded by his brother, or was a simple territorial lordship or something else, cannot be said. Ragnvald apparently died before his brother's defeat and death at Örebro in 1161, since Magnus made a donation to Vreta monastery (as it then was) in his memory.

Adolf Schück believed that from the mid-twelfth century onwards the title *dux* referred to a powerful noble who administered one part of the realm on behalf of the king while the king administered the other. He guessed that those who died at Visingsö, Karl Sverkersson, Erik Knutsson and Johan Sverkersson, had little control over Svealand when they died, and that this was effectively governed by their *dux*, although there is no evidence for this. Earlier, Schück suggested, Ulf Jarl *gamla* had governed Svealand on behalf of Karl Sverkersson, possibly his uncle. Yet one of Karl's seals is inscribed 'Sigillum Karoli sveorum regis' on one side and 'Hic idem summus gothorum dux' on the other. Schück interpreted this as meaning that he was king of all Sweden, but each region had a jarl, Svealand having one (assumed to be Ulf *gamla*) and Götaland either one or two, one each for Östergötland and Västergötland.[8] Another possible interpretation of the seal is that Karl had not yet been accepted as king in Götaland when the document was issued. Saxo's reference to Birger Brosa as *præfectum gothiæ* also raises the possibility that Birger was a 'governor' in Götaland, or perhaps Östergötland. In *Sverris saga* the *birkibeinar* ask Birger to give them military support and a leader, implying that they thought he had the authority to do this, but this could be in his capacity as the king's co-ruler or military leader (see below), rather than as jarl of Götaland.[9] If Saxo was indeed familiar with the exact political situation in Sweden in the 1170s, which is not certain, *præfectus* may imply delegated authority, but it could simply be a synonym for *dux* or jarl. In his references to another twelfth-century magnate in a neighbouring kingdom, Heinrich of Saxony, whose position remained essentially stable until he was dispossessed

[8] A. Schück 1951 p. 214. See Fleetwood 1947 pp. 9–12 for the seal.
[9] Sverris saga 9, p. 9.

by Emperor Friedrich in 1179–80, Saxo is also inconsistent, referring to him first as 'præfectus', thereafter generally as 'dux'.[10]

There is no doubt that more than one jarl was recognised in certain periods, and that their power was seen as residing in a given region, often Svealand or Götaland. One letter of 1167, sent by the Cistercian abbot of Rheims, refers to more than one *duce* (*ducibus*). Even if *dux* simply denoted the most powerful magnate in a given region, this still implies a tacit acceptance by the king that authority in that region lay in his hands. We do not know whether Ulf was 'jarl of Svealand', either at the time the Viby document was sealed or at any other time, nor whether Ulf and Guttorm, both named as *duces* in Karl's reign, were jarls at the same time. Saxo refers to Guttorm as a *dux* in a period in which Ulf must still have been alive, but this may be a retrospective view, written in the knowledge that Guttorm was appointed *dux* later.[11] Neither can we be certain that Guttorm and Birger Brosa were not both *duces* early in Knut Eriksson's reign. In the case of Birger, there are so many references to decisions taken by him alongside Knut Eriksson that he may even have acted as co-ruler of the kingdom, recognised as *dux* in Götaland or Östergötland, which he ruled on Knut's behalf, while Knut himself concentrated on ruling Svealand. It is barely credible that Birger was simultaneously appointed governor of Götaland and given a *jarladöme* of the *svear* and *götar*.[12] However, after the disappearance of Guttorm Birger was quite possibly the only jarl, since there is no hint that there was another.

Most of the lands of the *Erikska ätten* were in Västergötland, and those of their rivals the *Sverkerska ätten* in Östergötland. By the late

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[10] Saxo 14:5, p. 372 (*satrapes*) and 14:15 (first reference to Heinrich as *dux*), p. 392. The term *satrapes* is also used for other German nobles with assorted titles, for instance, Adolf of Holstein, a *graf* (14:28, p. 466). In the same section Ludwig of Thuringia, a *landgraf*, is called *princeps*.

[11] Saxo 14:28, p. 466. See Christiansen's commentary on p. 807, n. 351. Guttorm (Saxo writes *Guthermus dux*) must have fetched Christine in 1162, and Ulf is still referred to as *dux* in papal letters of 1164. Christiansen assumes there was only one jarl in Sweden, and that Saxo's view is retrospective.

[12] See below and Chapter 7. Later the *jarladöme* included the right to some taxes in coastal districts, perhaps because of responsibilities for the king's *ledung* fleet, if (as argued in Chapter 7) the levy fleet as it appears in the law codes (but not its substitute taxes) was introduced in Knut's reign. The levy had been largely substituted by taxes by the time the *landskapslagar* were written down, but the Svealand law codes, particularly that of Södermanland, do not preclude the calling out of the fleet.

twelfth century Östergötland was also a stronghold of the *Folkungaätten*, and Birger Brosa offered a way of controlling this region for Knut. In return alliance with the *Erikska ätten* increased the power of the contemporary *Folkungaätten*, Birger Brosa, Magnus Minnesköld and Karl Döve. As noted earlier, it is quite possible that they took lands confiscated from rebels, besides Birger being awarded an important position of state. Birger Brosa and his brothers effectively ruled Östergötland on behalf of Knut, who did not have the administration to rule other than through powerful magnates who owed allegiance to him. One indication of Birger Brosa's importance in Knut's reign is the addition of *Dei Gracia*…, 'By the grace of God…', to the title *Dux Sveorum et Guttorum* in some of his correspondence. The formula was normally used before the titles of a monarch, as it was for the first time in Swedish sources in the reign of Knut Eriksson, *Dei Gracia Rex Sveorum et Gothorum*.[13]

Schück assumed that considerable landholdings were necessary for a *dux*/jarl to have authority in a given region, but this need not be the case. In particular, he suggested that Ulf Jarl *gamla* could have had lands in Svealand, like Kol (probable son of Johan Sverkersson), assuming that he was Kol of Sko, hence his ability to fulfil this function.[14] However, evidence of landholdings in Svealand in the twelfth century is almost non-existent, and other evidence suggests that they were fragmented and that the region was difficult to dominate. Although a foothold in the region might have made a jarl more acceptable to the aristocracy of Svealand, it was not necessary, as there must already have been a network of *kungsgårdar*, the *husabyar*, whose resources he could draw on.[15]

Powerful landowning families certainly acquired estates in areas outside their original homeland, and already possessed some in the early twelfth century. In many ways Södermanland was a meeting point of influences from Uppland and Östergötland. Studies of runestones have also shown that families in the Viking Period owned land in Rekarne and Östergötland, and Svealand and Rekarne. Schück was certainly right in pointing out that the king lists of west

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[13] See Chapter 11:4. In Latin Christendom the symbol that a monarch was king or queen by the grace of God was his or her anointing with the chrism during the coronation rite, but it is not known whether Knut had been anointed.

[14] The *Lundby wedh Forss* (Rekarne), known to have been owned by descendants of the *Folkungaätten* in later times, was arguably acquired from Kol.

[15] See Chapter 8.

and east Sweden may differ in part because at times they had separate rulers, a reflection of the origin of these regions as separate kingdoms. Undeniably, unification into one kingdom was a slow process, which was not complete in the twelfth century, and the difficulty in administering both Götaland and Svealand was aggravated by topographical separation and the nature of Svealand's landholdings, not to mention its landholders. For this reason successive kings placed considerable power in the hands of trusted allies who were used to govern the less important regions of the realm, or perhaps the regions in which the king had few resources for his itinerary. Even in the reign of Valdemar Birgersson, Magnus Bengtsson effectively ruled Östergötland and Småland on his behalf, although he was not named jarl or *hertig*, but *lagman* of Östergötland and *fogde* in Kalmar.

By the reign of Magnus Ladulås, Svealand was the centre of the Swedish kingdom, but in Sverker I's reign the most developed and controllable region was Östergötland. Doubts have been expressed about his ability to govern Svealand at all, and it may be that his son Karl was the first king to appoint a jarl or jarls to govern regions on his behalf. There is a temptation to see Johan Sverkersson's death at the *ting* meeting as resulting from dissatisfaction at his rule in this capacity, but there is insufficient evidence. Jon-Johan may have owed his title to his status as the king's eldest son, in the same way as the later *hertigar*.[16] The other jarl of Sverker's reign, Karl Sunesson, may have acquired this title because he governed the region of Västergötland on behalf of Sverker, but again, he may have been called this simply because he was a territorial magnate. Sverker probably had no choice but to allow him to be effective 'king' in Västergötland.

Guttorm is an even more problematical character than the jarls that came before him, since we know so little of him. Unlike Karl Sunesson, Johan Sverkersson and Ulf there is not even a vague clue to his background. He was associated with both Karl Sverkersson and Knut Eriksson, but no record of a family connection to either exists. It must be assumed that he was a powerful noble, but there is no indication that he dominated one region, as Karl Sunesson did, or other later jarls may have done. It is a curiosity that he is addressed in Alexander III's letter calling for the faith to be spread in Finland, alongside the archbishop of Uppsala and other bishops,

[16] See Stade 1939 p. 116, and Ek p. 43. According to the poet, Jon was killed in Askaness, defending his homeland.

but the king is not. It is stretching the evidence to suggest that this means he governed Svealand on Knut's behalf; indeed, Knut's hold may have been weaker in Östergötland.[17] It is not impossible that Guttorm was the first 'jarl of the *svear* and *götar/gutar*', acting in a similar capacity to Birger Brosa, very likely his successor as the king's highest servant; but he is not named as such in any extant source.[18]

Schück nevertheless suggested that the title jarl was still used for more than one person after Knut Eriksson's reign. Honorius III addresses *duces* in a letter of 1224; whether he had any specific people in mind is unclear, and it was an uncertain period, possibly between Karl Döve's death and Ulf Fase's appointment. In 1247 William of Sabina referred to Birger Magnusson as the *dux* who dominated his *terra*, and Schück suggests that he was jarl of Östergötland while Ulf was still jarl of Svealand. We possess no other source to indicate that Birger was considered a jarl before 1248, when Ulf died, but he could have been *dux* of Götaland or Östergötland, and *dux sweorum et guttorum* only after Ulf's death. There was no written constitution in medieval Sweden, and no particular reason why there should have been a hard and fast rule as to who might be nominated a *dux* or jarl, or how many there were. Practice was loosely governed by convention, but old practices can be revived, so the possibility that there was only one jarl (*sveorum et guttorum*) for a period and then a revertion to two or more when it became politically expedient to recognise the authority of powerful nobles in such a way cannot be excluded. Ulf Jarl, for instance, in the name of Erik Eriksson, could have recognised Birger Magnusson's power and satisfied his ambition by recognising him as Jarl of Östergötland, establishing a kind of joint rulership. Nevertheless, the weight of evidence suggests that the precedent for a jarldom involving a degree of political and military authority throughout the realm was established in the 1170s, even if territorial lordships sometimes continued to exist alongside it.

The *jarladöme* or *hertigdöme* of the *landskapslagar* refers to something more than a territorial overlordship.[19] The nature of the earlier *jarladöme* must be gleaned largely from the sources of the late thirteenth and

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[17] DS 59, date uncertain (1165–81).

[18] Birgerus *dux* appears in a number of letters concerning the donation of land to Julita nunnery, of uncertain date, but belonging to Knut's reign: see DS 64 and DS 67.

[19] *Jarladöme* is used in this work to refer to the rights of the *sveajarl*, or *dux sweorum et guttorum/gothorum*, not the possessions or responsibilities of any possible *dux terrae* before 1250.

early fourteenth centuries, the age of the *hertigar* and afterwards. Birger Brosa's title, 'jarl of the *svear* and *götar/gutar*' suggests that his *jarladöme* combined the authority of previous jarls, which was arguably restricted to one *landskap*, but this new title is probably also connected with the introduction of additional powers. Like some bishops, the *jarl* and *hertig* had the right to certain taxes and lands. These were in coastal districts, which suggests that he had some responsibility for the defence of the realm.[20] Birger had presumably supported Knut against the rebellious *Sverkerska ätten*, and Knut would therefore have had good reason for appointing him to a special position that included military responsibilities, or even creating it for him. It is interesting that Birger became jarl in the same period that Niels Lund believes the coastguard *ledung* originated in Denmark.[21] In the twelfth century, like Denmark, Sweden was threatened by seaborne raiders, mainly, but not exclusively, from the southern and eastern Baltic.[22] Swedish sources are poor, but Danish ones give an indication that Danish and Wendish ships clashed off the coast of Småland in the 1130s. Since the Wends are known to have plundered large stretches of the coastline of the Danish islands, they probably raided Sweden as well. The earliest recorded activity within Swedish territory is the establishment of a base on Öland by Kuronian and Estonian raiders, who were then attacked by a Danish fleet.[23]

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[20] See also Chapter 7:3 on the *ledung*, its substitute taxes and possible association with the jarl.

[21] Lund 1996, especially pp. 233–44.

[22] Blomqvist 1979 pp. 133–34.

[23] Saxo 14:40, p. 512. According to Saxo, the Danes and Swedes cooperated in this attack, despite being at war with each other. *Knytlinga saga* gives a different picture, in which it is implied that the Danes received their information about the enemy from Ölanders, whom they had taken prisoner for this purpose. In *Ks* the whole object of the Danish expedition is to attack 'Kúrir', who are raiding Blekinge, whereas Saxo implies that the fleet was already in the area fighting the Swedes. The location of the place named by the Ölanders, Mon, is unknown, as is its harbour, Járnloka. Christiansen argued that Mon was the island of Mohn (now Muhu), off the coast of Estonia, where there were suitable harbours. This is possible, but it is questionable why the Danes would have chosen to interrogate Ölanders to find this out, or why the locals should have known more than the Danish fleet about an island 500 kilometres away by sea, unless they were believed to be in league with the pirates. Muhu also seems an unlikely base for Kuronians (but not Estonians), so *Knytlinga saga* too must be confused, at least about the identity of the raiders, if Christiansen is correct. It seems probable that Kuronian raiders were using a harbour near Blekinge, either on Öland or somewhere off the Swedish coast nearby, as a temporary base, and the Danes expected Ölanders to know where. In this case a more likely region is Möre, which might have been misspelt or badly copied as 'Mon'. See Knytlinga saga 123, pp. 306–07, and Saxo p. 849, n. 536.

Swedish annals record the destruction of Sigtuna in 1187, and according to *Erikskrönikan* this was by no means the only raid in this region.[24] Heinrich of Livonia tells us that a fleet from Saaremaa raided Denmark and Sweden in 1203, and records Swedish prisoners and booty being taken back to Saaremaa by the rebels in 1226.[25]

In the general sense that he was both a territorial magnate and a military leader the jarl of the realm was a successor to earlier jarls, but his title, his right to taxes, and any associated responsibilities for coastal defence extended beyond those of most magnates. With the exception of Johan Sverkersson's possible attempt to control the *jarladöme* through the appointment of his one-year old son and a possible short interregnum after the death of two of its members in 1220, the *Folkungaätten* took it as their own.[26] Birger Brosa's sons followed him, and after them his brother Karl, followed by Karl's son. Ulf Fase was not succeeded by any of his sons, due to the power amassed by Birger Magnusson, a possible cause of the friction between him and Karl Ulfsson hinted at in *Erikskrönikan*. After Birger's death the Latin title *dux* was used to refer to the *hertigar*, who were also referred to as *jarlar* in a number of early historical works.[27] In the late thirteenth century this was probably also the case; both jarl and *hertig* had the highest standing after the king himself, and medieval terminology was inexact. The meaning of the words *jarl* and *hertig* did not in any case differ in any significant respect. The noun *hertig* (OS *hertog/hertug*, Ger. *herzog*) is related to the noun *här* (ON *hær, hér*, OG *here*, 'army') and originally meant leader of a military force. In Germany by the thirteenth century a *herzog* effectively ruled a substantial territory and had the highest standing after the king. The word *hertig* appeared in Norway in 1237, referring to Skule, the jarl of Håkon Håkonsson, and in Sweden when Magnus Birgersson was given the title in 1255.

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[24] Ek p. 43. The poet blames Karelians, but they would have had to cross northern Finland and come south via the Gulf of Bothnia, or to sail from the Ladoga region, neither of which seems likely when they were not noted for long-distance sea raiding. More likely the author has chosen an enemy of his own time. It is interesting that Johannes Messenius blamed either Estonians or Kuronians: see MSI 1, p. 13, in which Messenius implies that the perpetrators of the sack of Sigtuna are Kuronians. In 12, p. 107 and 15, p. 30 Estonians are blamed.

[25] HCL 6:1 and 30, pp. 40 and 264.

[26] See Chapter 3:2 on the question of whether Sverker tried to make his son jarl or king.

[27] Olaus Petri treated the titles as interchangeable, but Messenius attempted to distinguish between them: see Olaus Petri p. 58, and MSI 12, pp. 107–08.

The lands of the jarl were subject to the same rules as royal estates, and could not (in theory) be alienated.[28] In 1303, shortly after Erik Magnusson had been given the title *hertig*/jarl, a commission made up of the archbishop, dean of Uppsala and the *lagmän* of Uppland was assembled to determine which lands and possessions belonged to the crown and which to the *dux*.[29] Clearly the status of many possessions was uncertain. In 1303 there had not been any *hertig* since the death of Magnus Ladulås, and for most of the period the realm had effectively been steered by Tyrgils Knutsson. The distinction between the jarl's lands and those directly administered by the other agents of the crown had probably been eroded. This is precisely what happened after 1319, after which no more *hertigar* appeared before the reign of Gustav Eriksson (Vasa, r. 1523–60), and all their former lands were treated as crown estates. The circumstances of 1303, in which Erik and Valdemar Magnusson were exerting pressure on their brother King Birger and wished to secure authority of their own, made the commission necessary.

Earlier documents indicate that ultimately the king owned both crown lands and the jarl's land; for instance, Magnus Ladulås referred to his ownership of Muskö, which was granted (wholly or in part?) with its income to the bishop of Strängnäs by the *hertigar* Erik and Valdemar Magnusson in 1309.[30] The island was then referred to as belonging to the *hertigar* (referred to as *insula nostra*), presumably including Älvsnabben, one of Sweden's most important military harbours. This indicates that it was land over which the *dux* had traditionally held authority, even allowing for Erik's and Valdemar's power over the whole kingdom in 1309, after their brother Birger had been defeated by them. Other regions recorded as being in the possession of Erik and Valdemar were apparently not crown estates, even those on the coast, for instance Mörkö, mentioned in 1310, that was among the king's 'bona patrimonia', indicating private ownership by the family.

The fact that taxes and other income from Muskö were granted to the bishop in 1309 suggests that the rights to this income were acquired with the land itself. The rights are clearly reminiscent of those acquired by the jarl together with the lands where the *ledung* was levied. In a certain region of Östergötland, 'Rods bo', the jarl

[28] Rosén 1949, p. 59.
[29] DS 1401.
[30] DS 1616.

had judicial powers, in particular when punishing homicide on his land.[31] In *Östgötalagen* his powers are analogous to those held by bishops in Stavs bo and Stols bo, and the king in 'Uppsala bo' (Uppsala öd). Assuming that the *rod* of Rods *bo* is analogous to the that of Rodslagen and the *roþer raetter* of *Upplandslagen*, the land could be interpreted as a 'skeppsgård', coastal land whose free inhabitants were subject to the *ledung* callout.[32] The *Byggningsbalk* of the same law code states that some regions owed taxes to both king and jarl, some only to the king. Since the regions near the coast owed more, presumably these were those that were taxed by both.[33] Hjärne is almost certainly correct when he argued that the extra two Gotland *penningar* (six instead of four) levied by Birger Magnusson from the six *härader* east of Aspveden, Östergötland, referred to in a letter of 1316, were those which had been owed to the jarl and his successors, the *hertigar*.[34] In this case taxes would have been paid to king and jarl in the proportion of two to one, the same as those paid by the Gotlanders. Birger had acquired Östergötland as part of the division of the realm with his brothers in 1310, and they (the *hertigar*) were therefore no longer taking the taxes owed to the jarl by that region.

The first *hertig* was Magnus Birgersson, son of Birger Jarl, during the reign of his brother, Valdemar. In common with many medieval law codes, *Upplandslagen* often provides more information about the regulation of relatively new problems (in 1296), such as *ledung* taxation in Uppland, than it does on ancient rights, which were considered to be unquestioned and well-established. *Upplandslagen* makes it quite clear that the *hertigar* had some sort of authority in Rodén, which must have been inherited from the jarl, but it does not tell us what this comprised.[35] Hjärne argued that among their lands must have been some in Tiundalands Rod, where a *bol* of the fishery in Älvkarleby in Västland *skeppslag* had been donated to Guttorm Jarl by Knut Eriksson. Birger Brosa was one of the witnesses when this donation was subsequently confirmed.

The tendency has been for scholars to assume that the jarl, later *hertig/ar*, administered certain areas that contributed to the *ledung* fleet or paid substitute taxes. But the authority of the jarl extended beyond

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[31] ÖgL Db 14.
[32] Hjärne 1947.
[33] ÖgL Bb 28. See also Erland Hjärne 1947 p. 81.
[34] DS 2053.
[35] UL Tingmålabalk.

the borders of Rodén, Rods bo and other coastal districts, since he also functioned as the most senior servant of the king at least as early as Knut Eriksson's reign, if not an effective co-ruler. Evidence for lands which the jarl or *hertigar* disposed of is restricted to smaller entities, *gårdar* or possibly whole islands such as those mentioned above. It may be that at some time in the twelfth century the jarl administered larger coastal districts directly, but there is no evidence for this. The division of taxes suggests rather that the jarl had been granted special rights in regions such as Rods bo and Rodén due to his responsibility for defence, for which the most important instrument was the *ledung*, not that his administration replaced that of the king in these regions. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the powers of the jarl were probably extended into the judicial sphere, either haphazardly for reasons of convenience, or because powerful jarls such as Ulf Fase usurped them. Both he and his father Karl Döve held the position during periods when kings were either minors or dependent on their support.

Birgitta Fritz argued that the terms *jarladöme* or *hertigdöme* (Latin equivalent *ducatus*) did not so much refer to given regions as to a collection of estates and privileges.[36] The *jarladöme* successively inherited by the *hertigar* Magnus Birgersson, Erik Birgersson and Erik Magnusson included the right to take a proportion of the taxes which had previously been owed to the jarl as organiser of the *ledung*. Referring to the first *hertig*, Magnus Birgersson (later King Magnus Ladulås), *Erikskrönikan* says:

> ok han wart hertoghe, Magnus,
> yffwer sudermannaland ok nyköpings hus
> ok ower alt thet som under hertugadömit laa[37]

In these verses *hertigdöme* need not refer to land. As Pipping pointed out, even the words 'kronnonna äghor äro lang ok breed, han wet wel hwar hon atskil, ok thet hertogomen hörer til', referring to Tyrgils Knutsson's period (1290–1304), did not necessarily refer to land, since *ägha* ('to have the right to', or 'be entitled to') could refer to possessions or income as well, and 'long and broad' was often used

[36] Fritz 1971 pp. 343–45. In this respect the title resembles the medieval concept of *regnum* or *kungadöme* (kingdom) as noted in Chapter 1:1.

[37] Ek p. 45. *And he was Magnus, hertig/over Södermanland and Nyköping castle/and over all that lay within the hertigdöme.*

to mean 'large' or 'many'.[38] *Erikskrönikan* was written shortly after the final disappearance of the *hertigdöme* in 1318, and by an author who must have been close to Erik Magnusson, the last *sveajarl-hertig*, so he was presumably aware of its nature. Fritz pointed out that *ducatus*, mentioned in the 1287 testament of Bengt Birgersson, King Magnus's brother, could not have referred to the lands he possessed as *dux Finlandie*, but to an institution, the income and possessions of the old *jarladöme*.[39] There is no evidence that Bengt, who was also bishop of Linköping, ever visited Finland, and *dux Finlandie* was probably no more than an honorary title. After the death of Bengt's brother Erik Birgersson in 1275 the title 'jarl (*hertig*) of the *svear*' was reserved for his nephew Erik, the son of King Magnus, but Bengt used a very similar seal and represents the jarl in the Alsnö statute, presumably because Erik was then a minor. Bengt must also have been the *dux* of the Tälje statutes of 1279, the only secular lord listed apart from the king.

During the years between 1275 and 1302, when Erik Magnusson actually became jarl/*hertig*, there was no jarl, but the jarl's *ducatus* was administered first by Bengt Birgersson, then by Tyrgils Knutsson. A number of documents, including Bengt's testament, refer to the *fogdar* (see Chapter 8) who actually carried out the day-to-day administration of the *jarladöme*, just as they did elsewhere. Before the *fogdar* appeared, the *jarladöme* was no doubt administered in the same way as other lands. Nevertheless, the position of the first *hertig*, Magnus Birgersson, clearly differed from that of the earlier jarls. He was a close relative of the king's, not a leading member of another powerful family. Valdemar and his brothers can have had no wish to give such power to any other family, and unlike Sverker II in 1202, were in a sufficiently strong position to take the jarl's rights for themselves as a result of Birger Jarl's victories.

In addition to his relationship to the king, Magnus owned possessions that may not have been part of the old *jarladöme*. Magnus was granted Nyköping castle and its *fogderi*, Södermanland, and the castle was later given to Erik Magnusson, thereafter playing a key role as a stronghold in the wars between him and his brother Birger.[40]

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[38] Ek pp. 94–95. See Pipping 1950 p. 524.
[39] DS 941.
[40] Ek p. 45, 115–16, 151–57.

Erik must have possessed it before 1305, since a letter from that year mentions this, so he probably acquired it with the *hertigdöme*.[41] That he owned more land nearby is clear from the records of the commissions of 1303 and 1304, in which an attempt to clarify the boundary between Attundaland and Södermanland was made in order to establish where the boundary between the jurisdictions of king and *hertig* lay. Since Attundaland and Tiundaland belonged to the *fogderi* of Stockholm, known to have been directly administered by the king's agents, Södermanland must have been within the jurisdiction of the *hertig*. Bengt Birgersson's testament refers to a castle and one or more towns within his (*hertigdömet's*) jurisdiction, and Erik Magnusson subsequently acquired Nyköping and Södermanland when he became *hertig*—assuming that the castle of the testament was Nyköping, both it and the surrounding *fogderi* appear to have belonged to the *hertigdöme* by 1285. Whether this was the case when Magnus Birgersson became *hertig*, is unclear.[42] Both *Erikskrönikan* and Ericus Olai appear to assume that they did, but even the former was writing over fifty years after Birger Jarl's death.

There is no reason why Nyköping or Södermanland would have belonged to the old *jarladöme*, which drew its income from scattered *gårdar* and coastal locations connected with the *ledung* organisation. It is therefore probable that Nyköping and its dependent territory were added to the new *hertigdöme* when Magnus took over, in keeping with other changes which were happening at the same time, namely the appearance of castles, *fogdar* and permanent mounted warrior retinues paid for by taxes which substituted for the *ledung* callout. The addition of Södermanland may have provided one reason for the change to the title *hertig*, since its possessor was now a territorial prince like his German counterparts. The *hertig* was to be second after the king. Accordingly, in the Alsnö statute Bengt is listed as having the largest retinue of horsemen, numbering forty, as opposed to the thirty who followed a bishop.[43]

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[41] ST 1, 157.

[42] The 1304 commission was probably called by the king—behind it seems to have been a dispute between the churches of Uppsala and Strängnäs, whose positions were probably supported by King Birger and *Hertig* Erik respectively, over the boundary and whether it ran north or south of Stadsholmen and nearby islands, in other words, south of the whole inhabited area of Stockholm.

[43] DS 692.

5.2. *The King and His Advisors*

Although the king's highest official before the Folkung Period, the jarl cannot have been his only advisor. Little is known about other advisors in the twelfth century, although one would expect them to come from those close to him, his *hird*, or officials who collected tribute or tax, or who had ecclesiastical sinecures. Westman argued that there was a link between the officials of the late thirteenth century and the earlier *hird*, referring to the *marsk* and *drots*. This is difficult to demonstrate, not least because there is no evidence of the *hird* as an organised institution with a fixed membership. Some of the titles later given to members of the king's council, such as *munskänk* (cupbearer) and *stekare* (cook) occur in references to earlier retinues, but there is no indication that these were anything more than valued servants who carried out tasks that might be expected within a king's or noble's household. The *stallare* (originally stableman, or, by extension, house-keeper) seems to have been a more important title, held in both Denmark and Sweden by close friends of the king.[44] The titles of two of the highest advisors to the king used during the late thirteenth century were imported, those of *marskalk* (marshall) and *kansler* (chancellor). Marshals such as Tyrgils Knutsson were also important members of the nobility, tied to the king through bonds of friendship and often marriage. No one outside the king's family held the position of Birger Jarl after he secured the throne for his son in 1250. In one sense the marshals of King Birger's reign were successors of the earlier jarls, as members of powerful noble groups with military responsibilities who had as much interest in limiting the king's power as in assisting him.

During the early thirteenth century a different 'office' had appeared in written sources, that of 'kansler'. The word derives from *cancellarius*, an official who first appears in the Carolingian Empire, assisted by notaries.[45] In addition to these, we hear of *capellani*, those who worked in the *capella*. As in the rest of Christian Europe, the personnel were recruited from the Church. The Church had always employed groups of clergy to manage its affairs, and the institution of communities of

[44] Latin *stabulo*—to stable; *stabulum*—standing-place, quarters, abode.
[45] See McKitterick 1983 pp. 77–85.

clergy in the wealthier churches had been accelerated after the ecclesiastical reforms of the eleventh century. These canonries managed finances, as well as performing services and administering to the pastoral needs of the people, but their scholarly abilities also made them ideal servants and advisors for the king and upper nobility, both ecclesiastical and secular, who increasingly needed scribes or administrators with a knowledge of law. The growth of offices can be traced in all three Scandinavian kingdoms. By 1250 the Danish king Valdemar II had the authority to take a canon from each cathedral as a clerk, but long before his time *capellani* had been employed by Knud the Great and Sven Estridsen. Often high churchmen in ecclesiastical sinecures were found in the king's personal service, such as Rike, Bishop of Sleswig, who served Erik Emune as chaplain. In Norway a scribe can be assumed to have assisted the twelfth-century kings Inge Haraldsson, Magnus Erlingsson and Sverre, who all issued written documents.[46]

The majority of extant twelfth-century letters that concern Sweden do not come from Sweden itself, but from outside, mainly from the papal curia. Nevertheless, although there are fewer extant documents from Sweden than from Norway or Denmark, Knut Eriksson also began to issue sealed letters after the mid-twelfth century, and must have employed people trained in the Church to do this, even if they were part of the king's retinue. There is an exchange of letters between Knut and the pope, several letters concerning land ownership involving Nydala and Viby-Julita monasteries and one from Knut to lagman Nils and associates in Småland.[47] These are all written in Latin. Other exchanges are known to have taken place between Knut and Heinrich of Saxony and Henry II of England. One letter written by Archbishop Stefan, concerning the dispute between Doter and her son Gere over land donated to Viby, suggests that even some lesser landowners were using letters in Latin, and may even have had some competence in it.[48] Inger Larsson suggests that

[46] The first reference by name is to Ivar Bodde, who was secretary in the service of Inge Bårdsson in the first decade of the thirteenth century, and the name *kansler* is first used in the first year of Magnus Lagabøter's reign, 1263. See Helle 1974 pp. 212–13.

[47] DS 71. In the same period Latin letters appeared on Knut's coins: see Chapter 11:5.

[48] DS 51, 1164–67.

some of those listed in witness lists in Knut's letters, such as Kol of Sko, may also have been advisors. The written word was becoming necessary to record agreements, conduct transfers of land and give proof of ownership, and must have paralleled the growth in legal knowledge. Before the advent of Christianity there was a tradition of recording events in writing, in the form of runes, but for the new religion the written word was of central importance. Churches owned massbooks, psalteries and songbooks, and it is presumably from this source that some laymen learned to write in the new fashion.[49] Runes may have remained the main method of writing in the vernacular until the fourteenth century, when the first letter written with the Latin alphabet appeared. In Denmark and Norway this had occurred a century earlier.

The first named as the king's *kansler* in Sweden is a Bishop Kol. The extant versions of the three documents in which this Kol appears belong to the sixteenth century. An entry in the Nydala lists for 1372 mentions the death of Knut (Eriksson) and his *cancellarius* 'Colo episcopus lincopensis'. The second document states that in 1248 Erik Eriksson and Birger Jarl granted a bushel of the *tionde* in Njudung and Finnveden to the monastery where 'bishop Culo at that time was the king's chancellor'.[50] The last document is an undated preface to a testament written for the abbess of Riseberga nunnery and an executor, who refers to himself as 'C. by the grace of God bishop of the church of Strängnäs and chancellor of the king of Sweden'. The first is certainly an interpolation, the second probably, and the third cannot be correct because there was no Bishop Kol of Strängnäs at that time. The Bishop Kol of Knut Eriksson's reign was bishop of Linköping, and the other was bishop of Strängnäs during the reign of Valdemar Birgersson. As Schück pointed out, bishop-chancellors were unknown outside the Empire before 1195.[51]

After the departure of Bishop Thomas of Åbo from his see there may have been bishop-chancellors who were bishops of Åbo, Bishop Björn being the first, possibly as part of the effort to incorporate Finland more closely into the Swedish kingdom. The documents that

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[49] The importance of the Church in encouraging the use of the Latin script, and of government administration in developing the use of the vernacular in it, has been emphasised by Inger Larsson. See I. Larsson 2003 pp. 7–29.

[50] DS 364. The surviving text dates from the sixteenth century.

[51] Herman Schück 1963a p. 142.

record these again survive in versions from the sixteenth century. The second (1520, from Västergötland) lists each of the three bishops who followed Thomas (Björn, Ragvald and Kettils) as *cancellarii*, to Erik Knutsson, Birger Jarl and Valdemar respectively. One of them may have been *kansler*, but it is less likely that all three were—there is a suspicion that, in the absence of any other recorded *kansler* for these reigns, a scribe has drawn the conclusion from one record that the *kansler* of the early Folkung reigns was always the Bishop of Finland.[52]

More certain is the position of Bishop Karl of Linköping as *kansler* to King Johan Sverkersson. Records from Nydala monastery, for which Karl, its 'fundator et defensor', had an especial importance, mention king and *kansler* together. Two original letters from Johan to Nydala and Riseberga are written in the same hand as Bishop Karl's letter to Nydala, although other letters from the bishop are in a different hand.[53] By this period there had already been a bishop-chancellor in neighbouring Denmark. In the same reign a *stabularius* (Sw. *stallare*) is mentioned as Johan's servant alongside *alii discreti* (other distinguished persons) in a document from Riseberga nunnery.[54] This title has clearly been given to a high-born advisor, suggesting that certain old *hird* or household titles had come to mean something more. Johan died young in 1220, and had probably needed guidance. His successor Erik Eriksson acquired Karl's successor as bishop of Linköping, Bengt, as his 'cancellarius et consiliarius', chancellor, and one of a group of advisors that included Knut Kristinasson and Knut Holmgersson.[55] They were not only nobles, but Erik's relatives. It may well have been conflict within this group (over precedence?) that contributed to Erik's overthrow in 1229. He was exiled from his kingdom from 1229 to 1235, but no *kansler* is recorded as a replacement for Bengt after his return. The early *kanslerer* were obviously advisors, in both cases to minors, but there is no evidence either *kansler* or the other titles were official positions, or any more than an honorary title. In this sense they were comparable to the *cancellarii* of the Carolingian Empire from which they derived their name.

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[52] SRS 3:2, p. 133. See Herman Schück 1963a pp. 143–44. The first document is earlier and comes from Östergötland.
[53] I. Larsson 2003 p. 32.
[54] DS 185.
[55] DS 216.

What came to be referred to as the king's *capella* was clearly derived from ecclesiastical example. In Innocent III's bull of 1207 Valerius, recently elected archbishop of Uppsala, is referred to as King Sverker's *capellanus*, probably not simply his chaplain, but an assistant and scribe.[56] A *kaplan* Nils assisted Bishop Bengt on his visits to Nydala, and the Statute of Skänninge of 1284 stipulated that bishops should take *kaplaner* on their diplomatic missions.[57] In 1262 Bishop Ragvald of Skara employed a *kanik* Aubjörn as his *kaplan*.[58] Church clerks appear also in the later *Västgötalagen* in the same capacity.[59] As in the case of *kansler* and *stallare*, there is no suggestion that any administrative apparatus was involved, or that any of these *cancellarii* or *capellani* advisors were any different to the 'friend' of King Johan Sverkersson in 1225, *magister* Stenar (later Bishop of Skara, after Bengt).[60]

The Church functioned as a training ground for clerks and a step in the careers of powerful men, most of all those destined for the king's immediate circle. In turn the king expected to have the greatest influence in appointing ecclesiastical officials. It is notable that Bishop Bengt of Skara supported the right of the king to appoint bishops in 1220.[61] There is no better illustration of how the system functioned than the career of Bengt, son of Birger Jarl and younger brother of King Magnus Ladulås, named as *cancellarius* in 1277. From his own testament, letters, *Hákonar saga* and *Magnúss saga* we have a good record of his life. He was schooled at Linköping cathedral.[62] There he became archdeacon in 1273, only a year after the position is first recorded, a useful preparation for the post as *kansler* (and bishop), as both had judicial and administrative functions. He was *kansler* while archdeacon, but resigned in 1280, subsequently adopting a knight's seal and becoming *hertig* of Finland in 1284.[63] As noted above, he seems to have functioned as *sveahertig* while the title was vacant. In 1286 he became bishop of Linköping.

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[56] DS 133.
[57] DS 359.
[58] DS 476.
[59] VgL 2, Kk 4, Kk 52.
[60] DS 215, DS 216.
[61] DS 186.
[62] Magnúss saga 5, p. 472, lists Bengt as *klerkr*, and DS 518 calls him *scolaris*.
[63] DS 3835.

It appears that Bengt was named *kansler* while a clerk, but then abandoned this title when he moved up the ladder. His position as advisor to Magnus Ladulås may have been no different, since there is no indication that the *kansler* had any specific functions, or was anything other than a general advisor. Magnus himself did much to encourage the production of clerks in the cathedrals of Sweden, donating land in Tjust to Linköping cathedral to institute a canonry.[64] Schück argued that from the beginning the officials of this cathedral expected to serve the king besides carrying out their religious functions.

Two months earlier Brynolf Algotsson, son of the *lagman* of Västergötland, who had been the first deacon at Linköping, appeared at a meeting of nobles in Kalmar. The donation of a *gård* in Lagmanstorp to him by Bengt Birgersson shows that he was a valued friend of the Birgerssons, and that he had recently returned from Paris. A new prelate was to be appointed at Kalmar (Bishop Henrik). Ingemund was then deacon, but died in 1283 and was succeeded by *magister* Peter Algotsson, previously a member of the new canonry at Mellösa. He then became Magnus's *cancellarius*, although he is not listed as having appeared at Alsnö in 1280.[65] He continued to use this title in 1289, even after the fall of his family and his flight to Norway.[66] Peter is next in the list after the bishops and *Dux* Bengt in the Skänninge statute of 1284, and advised on the king's testament in 1285. Those concerned in its issue were the 'bishop, *kansler* and *drots*', and the executors were 'the queen, Bengt, the bishops, the *kansler*, the *drots* and other lords as advisors'.[67] Within the testament the following advisors are named: *cancellarius*, *dux*, *cellerarius* and *drozatus*.

By the end of Magnus Ladulås's reign the *kansler* is a royal official alongside the *drots* and lesser officals such as *stallare* and *munskänk*, and the king appears to be ruling with regular meetings of a council of trusted nobles to advise him. The title *drots* is related to the Old Icelandic *dróttinn*, often used to translate the Latin *dominus*, 'lord', deriving from the old word for retinue, *drótt*.[68] The title *marscalchus* similarly has the connotation of leader of a military force, but is

[64] DS 600. See also Herman Schück 1959 pp. 219–31.
[65] DS 799.
[66] DN 328, DN 331, DN 335. In English letters to Norway, however, he is called *regis Norwegie clericus*: DN 377 and 378, DN 382 and 385.
[67] DS 802.
[68] An old word for retinue was *drótt*, referring to the retinue or *húskarlar* of a chieftain.

derived from continental European practice. It is difficult to ascertain what the difference between *marscalcus* and *drozatus* may have been. The two may often have been synonomous, although *Erikskrönikan* names a *Drotz* Abiörn during the early part of Birger's reign, when Tyrgils was *marscalcus*.[69] This would seem to imply that the marshal had greater power, but the regent of Magnus Eriksson's early years, Mats Ketilmundsson, is named as *drots*.[70] Although not in the testament, the *marscalchus* was first named in 1268. Despite the appearance of a king's council, there is no evidence that the functions of these senior members were precisely delineated, and the titles may therefore have remained honorary. Nevertheless, the reign of Magnus marks the origin of the departmentalisation of government, with the names of lesser officials, such as the *camerarius*, appearing for the first time in 1273, possibly with specific tasks, in this case the care of the king's treasury.

To the reign of Magnus Ladulås belongs also the first known royal archive and the introduction of a special royal *sigillum ad causas*. In 1284 the term *capella Regis* is first encountered, in a papal letter to Magnus. His brother Valdemar had also held meetings of important men to advise him, and his predecessors no doubt did the same, but it is in the reign of Magnus that a more or less permanent council appears, later known as the *riksråd*. Throughout Magnus's reign the Church continued to function in close cooperation with the monarchy—there was no Thomas Becket or Jens Grand in Sweden.

In the early fourteenth century many of those who were advisors to the king were also *lagmän*, such as Bengt Hafridsson and Knut Jonsson. The evidence is insufficient to tell us precisely how much direct influence earlier *lagmän* may have had at court. They had regional duties, but it is reasonable to assume that they had some influence, since most of those of the period 1200–1290 whose names are known to us were of high noble lineage. Many had some relationship to the *Folkungaätten*. Lars Petersson, who sacrificed his position by abducting Bengta Sunesdotter from Vreta in 1244, was *lagman* of Östergötland and a grandson of Erik Eriksson, and Höldo of Värmland may have been an illegitimate son of Jarl Håkon Folkvidsson of Norway. Five *lagmän* are of unknown lineage; three from the first

[69] Ek p. 89. Tyrgils Knutsson was effective regent from 1290 to 1306.
[70] See Ek p. 170.

half of the century, Näskonung, Germund of Attundaland and Folke of Västergötland, and two later *lagmän*, Peter Näf of Västergötland (1251–53) and Nils Sigridsson of Värend. However, it seems probable that they too came from powerful families. Those of known lineage also had close relatives with influence. Algot Brynolfsson was probably son of a certain Brynolf 'Stallare' (*stabularius*), who may have been a royal advisor, and two of his sons were close to Magnus Ladulås. Magnus Bengtsson († 1263), son of Bishop Bengt Magnusson, also combined the office of *lagman* of Östergötland with that of *fogde* in Kalmar. The combination of *lagman* and castellan in one person was to become more common in the fourteenth century.[71] In general, it appears that *lagmän* were more and more closely linked to the king, both through family ties and tenure of other positions that were directly appointed by him.

5.3. *The Election of Kings*

According to *Västgötalagen*, 'The svear have the right to make a king and also to cast him out'; in other words, it is the *svear* who elect kings.[72] In *Östgötalagen* there is also a reference to the *svear* 'taking a king'. Precisely what is meant by *taka* (modern Sw. *taga*, 'take') is uncertain—it could refer to election or to some ceremony, perhaps with religious overtones.[73] In *Upplandslagen* the word *taka* is used only to refer to the acceptance of the king by the three *folkland*, Fjädrundaland, Attundaland and Tiundaland, perhaps what was meant by 'the *svear*' in *Västgötalagen*. Appointment by the *svear*, mentioned by Saxo, is the only known rule for succession that clearly predated the appearance of the *landskapslagar*. How old it was and how it became accepted tradition in Götaland is a mystery. Despite this, neither *Sverkerska ätten* nor *Erikska ätten* could trace their origin to Svealand; indeed, it is difficult to imagine how families from Götaland originally became kings in Svealand except through the choice of the Svealand nobility, who may have done this precisely in order to

[71] Emilsson 2005 pp. 239–42.

[72] VgL 1, Rättlösabalken 1. *Svear egho konong at taka ok sa vræka*; OS *egho* (modern Sw. *äga*) could be translated as 'have the right to', or 'are entitled to'.

[73] See L.O. Lagerqvist 1982 p. 9.

ensure that the king's authority there was weak. Although it is nowhere stated, it also appears to have been the case that any candidate for the kingship had to be descended from a previous king, as in Norway. Sverker the Elder and Erik Jedvardsson are possible exceptions to this rule, since their ancestry is obscure. It is probable, the male line of Stenkil having died out, that both claimed the kingship through their marriages, Erik being married to a granddaughter of King Inge the Elder and Sverker to a former queen.

Upplandslagen gives the most complete (and arguably the earliest) description of the installation of a new king. First he was 'taken' by the three *folkland* of Uppland, then Uppland's *lagman* 'deemed' him king at Uppsala. The *lagmän* of the other regions followed: Södermanland's, Östergötland's, Tiohärad's, Västergötland's, Närke's and Västmanland's.[74] The king then had the right to rule over the land, strengthen the realm and the law and to keep the peace, as well as the legal right to Uppsala öd, and to extend it. By contrast with the statement of *Upplandslagen, Södermannalagen* says that 'the three folkland Tiundaland, Attundaland and Fjädrundaland shall first 'take' (*taka*) the king, with the council of all Sweden at Mora *ting*'. The B manuscript states explicitly that the *lagmän* of the different *land* went to Mora *ting*, each with a twelve-man *nämnd*. In Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* the stipulations are similar, but the 'taking' by the *folkland* of Uppland has also disappeared.[75] No specific site is designated as the place of investiture by *Upplandslagen* or the election statute of the *landslag*, but Mora field appears in *Västgötalagen, Södermannalagen*, *Erikskrönikan* and elsewhere in the *landslag*.[76] Mora is on the border between Attundaland and Tiundaland and only a short journey from Fjädrundaland or Uppsala, which would have been a convenient place for a coronation long before the fourteenth century; but the tradition may not be so old. The meaning of the term 'a morum' in *Södermannalagen* is ambiguous, and Sjöholm has argued persuasively

[74] The references to *taka* and *døma* have disappeared in Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*, which simply mentions election by an electoral college. These earlier terms may have had a ritual meaning—see Chapter 11.

[75] On balance, the greater similarity between the *Södermannalagen* election rules and those of Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* suggests that they belong to a period after *Upplandslagen* was codified.

[76] VgL; SdmL Kg 1.

that *Morating* has been added to the *Konungabalk* in this code in the fourteenth century.[77] *Erikskrönikan* specifically mentions the Mora stone in connection with the election of Magnus Ladulås, but the raising of the king on the stone almost certainly became part of the election ritual after *Upplandslagen* was written.[78]

Referring to the election of Magnus Nielsen in Västgötaland, Saxo mentions that it was illegal, because the *svear* retained the right to elect kings.[79] This indicates that the rules of *Upplandslagen* may have been followed before the law was codified, at the time when Saxo's history was written, in c. 1200. Saxo writes of a period eighty years earlier, and may have transposed the rules of his own day back to that period. Similarly, the statements of the Swedish law codes and king lists referring to earlier periods may not be reliable. However, as noted in Chapter 1, there are other indications that Uppland was regarded as the centre of *Sveariket* before 1200, and that Uppsala was the most important cult centre. Yet there is no evidence that any king was elected or crowned in Uppsala before Magnus Birgersson in 1273. Johan Sverkersson, Erik Eriksson and Valdemar Birgersson were all crowned in Linköping, and the site of Erik Knutsson's coronation in 1210, the first recorded in written sources, is unknown. On the other hand, this is not clear evidence that Uppland was not the place where kings were traditionally elected before Johan's reign. There were political reasons why he and the following two candidates might not have been popular in Svealand, and they were both backed by the *Folkungaätten*, whose power base then lay in Östergötland. It is likely that, while Uppsala was recognised as the place where kings should be appointed, its importance reflected in the early attempts to establish a diocese there and its selection as the seat of the archbishop of Sweden, divisions and rebelliousness among the Uppland nobility sometimes made election of a king there impossible. Candidates with royal blood-lines came from Götaland, and so did the only factions sufficiently large and powerful to back them as kings. No specific regulations for election are known of before the codification of Uppland laws. For this reason it is difficult to know

[77] SdmL Kg 1.

[78] Ek p. 59. See also Sjöholm 1988 pp. 297–8, n. 5, and Chapter 11 of this book.

[79] Saxo 13:5, p. 119.

whether in *Upplandslagen* the nobility of Svealand was trying to reassert an ancient control over the election process through the decision of the *lagmän* on whether he was king over Uppsala, or whether some of the stipulations were new. While the history of the struggles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries indicates that election was an ancient process, many references to other matters in the law code concern taxes and fines which had certainly been introduced after 1250.

It is generally assumed that the election rules of *Södermannalagen* belong to a later period than those of *Upplandslagen*, since Södermanland's law was codified later and they have much greater similarity to those of Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*. However, it is worth noting that there are reasons to regard the *ledung* rules of *Södermannalagen's Konungabalk* as reflecting earlier practice than those of *Upplandslagen*. (see Chapter 7). It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some rules in the same *balk* derive from earlier and some from later practice than those of the corresponding *balk* in *Upplandslagen*, since the compilers may have acquired their information from a variety of sources, and need not have followed the pattern of an existing written code from a neighbouring land. In *Upplandslagen* the king is selected by the *lagmän* of Uppland. As in *Södermannalagen*, the landed nobility have control over the election. This may be more a reflection of what the nobles wanted than what actually happened. The process of electing kings as it appears in *Upplandslagen* has been seen both as a survival of an ancient right and as an attempt to weaken increasing ecclesiastical and royal influence.[80] There is no clear separation between secular and religious law in *Upplandslagen*. It is notable that the bishop is not mentioned at all in the introduction, nor in the election process until the symbolic religious ceremony in Uppsala that came after the investiture by the nobility and the acknowledgement of the king's authority that occurred during his ritual journey round the realm, the *eriksgata*. This contrasts with contemporary Norwegian practice. In the fourteenth century there is a progression towards greater ecclesiastical influence in the selection process. By the time of the mid-fourteenth century *landslag*, the possibly ancient rites of taking and deeming have disappeared, with a corresponding increase in the importance of the coronation and anointing of the king.

[80] Sjöholm 1988, Hellström 1971 pp. 245–54, Lönnroth 1959b p. 20.

Although *Upplandslagen* does not contain a full explanation of what might occur in the election—for instance, there is no mention of procedure should there be any disagreement or of the right to inherit the kingship—these matters are dealt with in the later election statute. In 1284 Magnus Ladulås was able to procure the succession of his son before his death, and this has been interpreted as a landmark in the formation of the Swedish state, the first occasion on which son succeeded father as king. In 1303 the nobility agreed that Magnus should follow Birger in the same way. This agreement collapsed after the war between Birger and his brothers, and thereafter such agreements were not adhered to.[81] Although the king's son had the right to stand, his election was not automatic. To judge from those who are known to have gained or striven for the kingship, a requirement of royal blood was necessary, but this is not incompatible with election; in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Norway, for which we have more evidence, kings were elected but were also expected to demonstrate descent from kings in order to be candidates. There sons of mistresses were as suitable as sons of wives, but the concept of legitimacy derived from Church teaching, and did not fully penetrate Norway until the fourteenth century. It might be expected that the situation would be comparable in contemporary Sweden, but no case of an 'illegitimate' son succeeding to the kingship is attested.

The origins of the *eriksgata* are unknown. The term appears in *Östgötalagen*, *Upplandslagen* and *Södermannalagen*. It is therefore difficult to trace back much before the late thirteenth century, although the journey of a king to receive some form of homage on his accession might be older than the name. Such a journey is mentioned in *Västgötalagen*, even if it is not named *eriksgata*. It is stated that a king named Ragnvald Knaphövde showed his contempt for the law through his failure to observe local customs 'when he came to Götaland after his election on Mora stone', bold and confident and without *gisslan*.[82] As a result the *västgötar* threw him out of the *ting* and, according to the memorial stone of Ragnvald, did not have a king for several years.

[81] A succession of Swedish kings were removed after 1300: Birger Magnusson was removed in 1319, and his son did not succeed him. Magnus Eriksson (son of his brother Erik) succeeded, and was removed in 1363. His successor Albrecht of Meckleburg was removed in 1395. In the fifteenth century Karl Knutsson Bonde was removed and regained the throne twice and the union kings Erik XIII, Christian I and Hans were all driven from Sweden.

[82] VgL, 4 (king list), 15:10.

Ragnvald is otherwise unknown, but may belong to the period after the death of Inge and before the accession of Sverker (c. 1120–30). Unfortunately neither the stone nor the tale in the law text can be shown to originate in this period. Nevertheless, the tale suggests that in certain circumstances, although the king was elected by the *svear*, he might be rejected by a local *landsting*. It is notable that Ragnvald is said to have broken the (ritual?) rules by not acquiring *gisslan* (hostages or safe-conduct) before he arrived at the *ting*. According to *Upplandslagen* each *lagman* 'deemed' the new king as such when he visited the regional *ting*, but the precise meaning of *døma* is uncertain. It may simply have been a ritual act, as suggested by its use in *Södermannalagen*, in which the *lagmän* of the various land and their *nämnd* have already taken part in the election in Uppland when the *eriksgata* takes place, but circumstances may have changed between the codifications of *Upplandslagen* and *Södermannalagen*.

The word *gata* indicates a short route, perhaps originally through the three regions of Uppland, Tiundaland, Attundaland and Fjädrundaland, although it should be noted that no Fjädrundaland *folklandsting* is mentioned in *Upplandslagen* or any other source.[83] It has been suggested that Erik was an ancient overking, king of the *svear*, or St. Erik, or not a person's name at all, and that the journey may owe its origin to the period when *götar* and *svear* first became linked in the person of the king.[84] However, all such theories must remain speculation. According to *Upplandslagen*, after his investiture in Uppsala the new king rode to Strängnäs (Södermanland), Svintuna (Östergötland), Holaved (Småland), Junabäck (Västergötland), Ramundeboda (Närke), Uppbåga bro (Västmanland), Östens bro (Uppland) and then back to Uppsala. The procedure appears as follows in *Västgötalagen*:

> Svear egho konong at taka ok sva vræka
> han skal mæþ gislum ovan fara ok

[83] The origins of this division into *folkland* are also difficult to trace, but most archaeologists think they developed after 1100: Hyenstrand, 1974. Tiundaland—the *(folk)land* consisting of ten *hund(are)*. Attundaland—the land of eight *hund(are)*. Fjädrundaland—the land of four *hund(are)*.

[84] Holmbäck and Wessén suggest a plausible explanation that it derives from an appellative *eriker*, from *ein-rikr*, 'ruler of all', which then became identified with the name *Erik*: SLL 1, *Upplandslagen* p. 53, note 5. The earliest probable king of both *götar* and *svear* is Olof Skötkonung, the earliest referred to in a source as such is Karl Sverkersson.

i östrægötland þa skal han sænðæ mæn
hingæt til alðræ götæ þings þa skal laghmaþer gislæ[85]

At each place he swore to uphold the local law and to keep the peace, and he was accompanied to the next destination by men from there, acting as protection or hostages (*gruþ* and *gisslan*). *Östgötalagen* states that the king levied a special tax, *inländing*, of forty marks from each *härad*.[86] *Västgötalagen* mentions a homage tax, but not what this involved.[87] Sjöholm argues that *eriksgata*, like the law-codes, has its origin in continental practice; but, while the form of the procedure may have been influenced by continental or other Scandinavian practice, there seems every reason why such a journey might have taken place in the twelfth century, when the king's 'administration' was carried out by his own immediate following and much of the service received from other nobles was given in the form of food and lodging, and hostages were no doubt given too.[88] However, there is no record of an *eriksgata* at the accession of Magnus Ladulås (1275) or Birger Magnusson (1290), so there is a possibility that it was not carried out in the thirteenth century, and was revived or invented for the accession of Magnus Eriksson (1319).

According to *Upplandslagen*, following his return from the *eriksgata* the king was crowned in Uppsala church by the archbishop and other bishops, which completed his investiture and gave him the right to *Uppsala öd*, to *dulgadråp* and *danaarv*, and to award land to those who gave him service.[89] The conditions of the king's election, his swearing to uphold the *edsöre* laws as agreed by himself and the nobility, and to uphold the laws of the land, are mainly in the interests of the secular nobility. In *Upplandslagen* the spiritual investiture is therefore no more than a final (if necessary) confirmation. The situation has changed in the later election statute, in which the king can be consecrated and crowned in Uppsala or any other town, and the bishop has a more significant role, above that of the *lagman*.[90]

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[85] VgL, R:1. The Svear have the right to take or eject a king/He shall with *gisslan* travel down to Östergötland. Then shall he send representatives to the *ting* of all the *götar*. Then shall the *lagman* send out *gisslan*.

[86] ÖgL, D 5:1.

[87] VgL, Kg 1.

[88] Sjöholm 1988 pp. 81–90. Sverre Bagge has traced the progress of the king from noble warrior leader to God-appointed king of the nation in thirteenth-century Norway (on the basis of *Sverris saga* and *Hákons saga hákonarsonar*) in Bagge 1996.

[89] UL, Kg 3.

[90] MEL, Kg 8 and R 1.

Additions to the text of *Södermannalagen* (ms B) reflect the same change.[91] It may be asked why, if Birger Persson's *nämnd* was attempting to undermine royal control over inaugurations and the institution of *edsöre* laws in *Upplandslagen*, it did not also endeavour to re-assert the role of the *ledung* fleet levy in place of substitute taxes that enabled the king to reduce his dependence on noble military support. In the later *Södermannalagen* the fleet levy is given greater prominence. Possibly, especially if Uppland was the main centre of resistance to Birger Jarl in 1247–52, the introduction of relief taxes had gone further there than elsewhere.

The *edsöre* laws are often attributed to Birger Jarl, although there is no clear evidence for his lawmaking, largely on the basis that he had more opportunity to introduce stringent rules and fines than his predecessors. This may be correct, in which case the above laws might represent an attempt by the nobility (or at least those who participated in the codification of *Upplandslagen*) to assert more influence over them. The requirement of prior enmity as a precondition for some of the *edsöre* laws to be enforced, which restricted the number confirmed, was probably introduced after 1285, as it does not exist in Magnus Ladulås's Alsnö statute. More certain is that the insistence of *Upplandslagen* that the king was crowned in Uppsala, and which disappeared in Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*, was not adhered to, or did not exist, before the election of Magnus Ladulås, and therefore may have been something introduced by the codifiers specifically in their own interests—not just to restrict the power of kings and bishops, but of nobility outside Uppland as well.

The interpretation of *Upplandslagen's* election rules as an attempt to weaken the power of the king also rests on the assumption that his right to designate his son as successor during his lifetime had already been established by 1296. Magnus Ladulås had certainly secured agreement for the succession of his son before his death, but this does not necessarily mean that he saw himself as establishing a system in which future kings would automatically be followed by their sons. His primary purpose was no doubt to safeguard his own son's succession. Prior to the reign of Magnus, while it may have been theoretically possible to achieve a *coup* by carrying out an election ceremony quickly, this would have left the new king in an

[91] SdmL, ms B, Add 1:6.

extremely vulnerable position. In practice agreement must usually have been secured with a sufficient number of powerful nobles to achieve this before the election, just as Magnus did. But before 1250 the existence of a rival dynasty with its own supporters and to which disillusioned supporters of the new king might turn ensured a permanent threat. In 1284 Magnus was in a much stronger position to obtain the backing of the nobility for his chosen successor than his predecessors. The principle that a king should have ancestors who had been kings already existed in 1130, and his father Birger Jarl had removed the remaining descendants of kings from other families. Since he himself had seized the throne from his brother, Magnus was no doubt aware that any rival to his or his son's throne was likely to come from within his own family, but no such challenge existed in 1284. For this reason he was able to secure the election of Birger as a minor, but the disorder that ensued after 1300 undermined Birger's position.

CHAPTER SIX

TERRITORIAL DIVISION

Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* states that in the mid-fourteenth century Sweden was divided into nine *lagmansdömen* (districts over which a *lagman* had legal authority) and seven *biskopsdömen* (bishoprics).[1] Written evidence for the functioning of the *hundare* comes largely from law texts and documents of the late thirteenth century onwards, but also from references in chronicles and annals, and accounts, most of which are mid fourteenth-century or later. A vast amount of literature has been engendered in efforts to uncover the origin and possible earlier functioning of the administrative units mentioned in these sources. The origins of almost all Swedish administrative units named in the *landskapslagar* are lost in obscurity.

Uppland itself was probably brought into being, at least as a judicial-administrative entity, when *Upplandslagen* was codified (1296), as the name is not recorded before that. Its three *folkland*, Attundaland, Tiundaland and Fjädrundaland are much older, first referred to in the Florence document of c. 1120.[2] The most important territorial-administrative unit of *Upplandslagen* that clearly predates the law texts is the *hundare*, which was itself a subdivision of the *folkland*. Alongside this, or as subdivisions of it, existed half *hundare, hundaresfjärdinger, hundaresåtting, skeppslagar, socknar, tolfter* and *tredingar*. Because these units appear in the one law text, albeit in a variety of functions, there has been a tendency to treat them as cogs in an administrative machine which itself functioned as a unity, this despite the fact that even in more recent times, when there were arguably more resources to integrate different administrative functions into one system, administrative machineries usually consisted of overlapping territorial units designed for different purposes. Far from simplifying administration, a centralised authority often complicates it as it exerts its influence in an increasing number of areas, since it rarely has the opportunity

[1] MEL, Kg 1:1.
[2] DS 16. In this document Attundaland is not named as a *folkland*.

to sweep away older structures, but must utilise them as well as constructing new ones.

In the Svealand *landskapslagar* the *hundare* functioned as *ting* region and tax district, both administered by the *länsman*, and in the organisation of the military *ledung* and regulation of trade.[3] In Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* the *hundare*, or at least its name, was replaced by the *härad*, bringing all of Svealand into line with Götaland, but the name *hundare* continued to be used in other written sources well into the fifteenth century. Generally the boundaries between medieval *hundare/härader* follow natural obstacles or pass through unsettled regions between *byar*, waterways or belts of forest.[4] Such unsettled regions were *allmänningar* (*allmæningær*, common land) at the beginning of the fourteenth century, to which all had right of access, but much of this land was subsequently occupied during the later Middle Ages and became private land.[5] The boundaries of the *härader* (or earlier *hundare*) nevertheless remained constant throughout the late thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, although there was a wide variation in their size and wealth.

One line of inquiry into the original function of *hundare* and *härad* has been the names themselves. In his article *Häradet* Stefan Söderlind saw their origin in the Roman *centuriatio* of the fourth century AD, in which agricultural land was divided into *centuriae*, in turn divided into 100 double *plogland*, lots for the military or urban colonists. This system, he argued, was inherited by the Germanic kingdoms, as shown by the similarity of nomenclature in many parts of Europe. He assumed that the *härad* arrived in Sweden and Denmark at the same time, based on the Carolingian model and originating in the later Iron Age, c. 750–900 AD.[6] The words *kind*, *hund* and *hundare* represented an earlier stage in terminology.[7] Unfortunately neither Swedish nor Danish evidence supports a link between *härad* and the

[3] *Dalalagen* is an exception. Contrary to what some have argued, there are probably no thirteenth-century or earlier precursors to this, and it was most likely devised as colonisation of Dalarna gathered pace in the later Middle Ages. It is exceptional in that Dalarna had only one *hundare*, as a part of Västmanland, but because of its size the *treding* became the administrative district for almost all purposes: see Utterström 1983 pp. 196–97.

[4] See, for instance UL Byalagsbalken 17, and Byalagsbalken 20, which deals with areas where there are no clear boundaries.

[5] UL B 22:3, B 23:1.

[6] Söderlind 1968 pp. 159, 163.

[7] Söderlind 1968 p. 62.

number 100 or the existence of a link with *plogland*. Söderlind's contention that the place-name component *kind* derives from *cent* was also dubious. Thorsten Andersson held that *kind* meant 'family', 'kin-group' or 'people', and few now dispute this. Nevertheless, Söderlind's *härad* theory is echoed in the theory that the origin of *hund*-derived administrative terminology is to be sought in Roman organisation and arrived in Germanic-speaking Europe via Frankish Gaul, its most powerful recent advocate being Murray.[8] According to his argument, the *hund*-organisation cannot have arrived in Sweden before the eighth century at the earliest.

Other scholars have sought the origin of the *hundare* in Germanic tribal organisation. Andersson concluded that the name *hundare* contained two elements, *hund* and *här*, one hundred and 'band' or 'army'.[9] Like the *härad*, the Danish and Götaland equivalent, the *hundare* became a territorial and judicial unit. Comparable names existed in the present day regions of England, Frisia, the Netherlands, western Germany and Switzerland, but Andersson believed that continental and English terminology had few links, the former administrative units having a military origin and the latter judicial. Andersson holds that the *hundare* replaced an older *hund* unit, as preserved in the names of the Uppland *folkland* and several *hundare* names, such as Hagunda. A comparison may be made with the noun *hunno* (Old Saxon) or *hunne* (Middle High German) which existed in continental Europe, meaning 'leader of a hundred men', corresponding to the Frankish *centenarius*.[10] *Hund* does not exist as a place-name component in continental Europe, but *hundare* names do appear in the forms *-huntari* or *-hunderi*, in western Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Andersson is correct in discarding Söderlind's theory that the *hundare* was a measurement of settled land (adopted wholly or in part by several archaeologists) for lack of evidence, and also in suggesting that the Scandinavian *hundare* or *härad* administrative division need not have been created in imitation of continental practice, but it is impossible to assess the degree to which it may have been influenced by it.[11]

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[8] A.C. Murray 1988 pp. 59–100.

[9] T. Andersson 1982a pp. 54–55.

[10] Thorsten Andersson accepts that the words *hund* and *hunno* may have their origin in Roman vocabulary, but is very unwilling to accept that administrative districts with names derived from these may also trace their origins, at least in part, to Frankish administration.

[11] Hyenstrand and Ambrosiani have both been influenced by Söderlind's land measurement *hundare* theory.

The debate over the origin of the *hund*-districts has sometimes been confused because scholars have been arguing about two different things, the origin of the administrative district and the origin of the *hund*-name. It is quite possible that districts were renamed *hund*, *hundare* or *härad* without any other change in their character.[12] Andersson has demonstrated that *hund*-names existed in Merovingian Period Europe, possibly earlier; but there is no reason why, when this term was adopted and adapted in kingdoms where Germanic languages were spoken, they should not have drawn their administrative example at least in part from the *centenarius-centena* model of the Merovingian and Carolingian Frankish kingdoms, heavily influenced by Roman practice.[13] While a theoretical decimal basis to the organisation of Migration Period tribal armies is believable, a military and judicial administrative district organisation seems less probable; it is therefore difficult to see what the advocates of a Germanic origin to the *huntari-hunderi-hundare* organisation have achieved other than to show that the names had a Germanic origin, since neither English *hundred* nor Swedish *hundare* as known from written sources can be shown to have had much in common with any ancient Germanic organisation.

The name *härad* is restricted to Scandinavia, appearing first (as an attachment to another place name, *-herathi*) in a 1085 letter of St Knud, in which he donated land to Lund cathedral.[14] Andersson argues that the name existed before this in Denmark, originating as a combination of *här* and *råd* ('power' or 'authority'), with a meaning similar to *hundare*, but thereafter became a term for a settlement unit in both Denmark and Sweden. In this form it exists as a component of many place-names, including one in Uppland.[15] The name then acquired its meaning as a territorial unit or group of settlements in Götaland and Södermanland at some stage in the Iron Age, possibly when the different *land* came to be seen as regional entities. Andersson distinguishes between *härad* and *hundare*, arguing that the first clearly has its origins as a settlement unit, while the second originated in a military organisation. He may be right as regards the origin of the words, but the distinction is misleading as

[12] As observed by P. and B. Sawyer 1993 p. 85.
[13] As argued by A.C. Murray 1988 pp. 64–70.
[14] DD 1:1, 3.
[15] T. Andersson 1982a pp. 67–69 and 1982b p. 57.

regards the nature of Swedish territorial units; territorial divisions with names derived from *hund* and *hunno* are likely to have lost any real connection to groups of 100, and even if people were aware of this meaning it is hardly likely that weapon-bearing men were divided into groups of 100 irrespective of where they lived.[16] No doubt groups of armed men were assembled by local chieftains from given settlement concentrations, as they would have been in the *härader* too. There was no standing army in Iron Age Scandinavia, and only the immediate retinues of kings or jarls who controlled large areas are likely to have formed more or less permanent military units. Neither their recruitment nor possible levies of farmers has any clear connection with the *ledung* as known from the law codes.

On the basis that the name *hundare* was linked with the number 100, or 120 if the duodecimal system is used, scholars have built a whole series of hypothetical administrative structures. An assumption has frequently been made that the Swedish *hundare* was once more uniform in size than it is in *Upplandslagen*. Theories were made on the basis of linguistics and place-names, besides what could be determined from the later law codes. These involved a great deal of guesswork. More recent hypotheses have been tested with the aid of computer technology.[17] A powerful influence on all of these was the work of Erland Hjärne. Hjärne linked the origin of the *hundare* and the *hund* with the *ledung* in Attundaland and Tiundaland, suggesting that a contingent of 100 men was drawn from it (four twenty-four oared ships, ninety-six oarsmen and four helmsmen).[18] He thought *hund* was an older term, but was not necessarily replaced by the *hundare*, both having developed alongside each other. The *hundare* was a settlement unit consisting of three *tredingar*, one of which was a *skeppslag*, the district where the *ledung* was equipped.[19] He drew an

[16] A decimal organisation is known to have been used in armies assembled by relatively unsophisticated polities, such as those of Turkic and Mongol armies, but these were primarily nomadic societes, whose armed men could be organised into whatever military units were required without major disruption to their economies. This decimal organisation was inherited by more sophisticated polities taken over by Turkic or Mongol élites, such as Mamluk Egypt and Ilkhanid Persia, but they still depended heavily on horsemen for the core of their armies, which were either recruited as permanent units or levied from nomadic tribesmen. Even in these armies, however, unit numbers are unlikely to have conformed exactly to the decimal. See, for instance, Morgan 1986 pp. 88–89, Ayalon 1980 pp. 321–49.

[17] Such testing does not prove any hypothesis, it merely proves that it is possible.

[18] Hjärne 1980 p. 333.

[19] Hjärne 1952 pp. 117–18.

analogy between *hund* and *tolft* (twelfth), which he also believed was an administrative district. In their search for an administrative system which predated the *landskapslagar*, later scholars seized upon this name, which occurs in the term *tolftkyrka* as well as in the names of four *socknar*, Tolfta in Vendel, Husby-Sjutolft in Trögd, Frösthult in Fjädrundaland and Lund(tolft) in Attundaland.

Adolf Schück concluded that the original *folkland* and the *hund* should have been one and the same, but that the *folkland* were originally considerably larger than they appeared at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Their sub-divisions, named *storhundare* by him, were in turn divided into *hundare*, of which the *skeppslag* of the coastal regions were once a part. Schück's theory was subsequently utilised alongside Hjärne's by later scholars, and the *storhundare* turned up in various guises in their work. Like Hjärne and Schück, Hafström saw the *hundare* as a *ledung* district in origin, proposing that later *hund* had arisen as subdivisions of a bigger *hundare*, and that the *tolft* was the basic administrative division for the raising of the *ledung*.[20] The latter, since it appears in the *landskapslagar* as a levy for seaborne expeditions, was generally assumed to have developed in the Viking Period. Hafström conceded that there were also *tolftkyrkor*, but argued that this was a later development after Christianisation.[21] Following Hjärne, he hypothesised that there were 'inner' and 'outer' (coastal) types of *hundare* in Uppland, the first with two *skeppslag*, each of eight *tolfter*, and the second with two *tolfter*.

Largely on the basis of the later law codes, Lindquist and Sporrong both suggested that the *hundare* had its origin as a tax-administration district, in Östergötland and Närke respectively. Lindquist proposed 475–600 AD as the period of origin, arguing that the Viking Age *ledung* organisation was a secondary development.[22] Sporrong regarded the *ledung* as part of the development, but nevertheless considered that the *hundare* began its life earlier, in the Vendel Period, being subject to later revision.[23]

The variety of theories demonstrates the problem faced by all those seeking to uncover the origin of the territorial divisions of the

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[20] Hyenstrand did not accept all Hafström's *socken* examples as primary units (i.e. containing primary *tolfter*): See Hafström 1949 pp. 134–138, and Hyenstrand 1974 p. 13.

[21] Hafström 1949 p. 142 ff., B. Lundberg 1972 p. 79.

[22] S.-O. Lindquist 1968a pp. 88, 112–20, 155.

[23] Sporrong 1971 pp. 197–210.

landskapslagar. The source problem is aggravated still further if an origin outside the tax system is sought. For many archaeologists, working on the premise that the tax system is based on settlement units, the evidence provided by early settlement (at least in the Mälar region) provided the necessary evidence to construct hypotheses for the origin of administrative division. Ambrosiani had also argued that taxation developed alongside (and because of) an increasingly differentiated class structure.[24] Models of administrative development became increasingly complex, particularly with the increase in archaeological data and the advent of computer mapping, which enabled theorists to view something approximating the whole landscape and its settlement patterns in different periods. Thus Hannerberg produced a more detailed study in 1977.[25] In part his purpose was to deny that the Roman-Carolingian model had much influence in Sweden. According to his model, villages were already organised into a hierarchical system of administrative divisions for religious and military purposes by 600 AD. Hannerberg's process was gradual, brought about by expansion of settlement for which archaeology provided evidence, particularly in the form of cemeteries.[26] According to his theory, the *tolft* preceded even the formation of *hundare* or *hamnor*, and *åtting* taxation, developed for the purposes of the *ledung*, evolved well before the Folkunga Period.

By contrast to Hannerberg, Ekbom approached the question from another perspective, the later written sources.[27] The *Viennetiondelangder* of c. 1314 and 1343 from Uppsala and Strangnäs dioceses (*Liber ecclesie Stregnensis*) are records of *tionde* (tithe) taxation of *socknar* (parishes).

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[24] Ambrosiani 1982a p. 218.

[25] Hannerberg 1977.

[26] In the Mälar region härader and hundare developed via hypothetical *kumlabygder* and *helgärdar* respectively, and *hamnor* represented late *hundare*, which were divided into *ättingar* or retained older *tolfter*. The Viking Period was naturally also a period in which expansion and increased riches from trade and plunder would cause change, but Hannerberg saw this as resulting mainly in the development of the *ledung*. The development of the latter brought about stage four of Hannerberg's model, identifiable by the introduction of *åtting* taxation. This stage was followed by the development of land taxation and the replacement of the *ledung* by payments in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. That *åttingar* were introduced into each *folkland* for the purposes of the raising of the *ledung* fleet was originally a theory of Hafström 1949. p. 132, on the basis that the *ledung* taxes were taken from the *åttingsmän* and *hamnamän*. See UL, KgB 10:2. This stage was followed by the development of land taxation and the replacement of the *ledung* by payments in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

[27] Ekbom 1974.

Although this had not been stated explicitly, they had in fact formed the starting point for many previous scholars' attempts to unravel the development of the administrative system, as it is from their 1314 records that the *hundare* boundaries are first known. Ekbom used them to calculate his own average values, rather than taking the variable figures which the 1314 lists presented, which arguably created an artificial basis for his conclusions. He was unwilling to accept any great age for the taxes of the written sources.[28] Ekbom's proposals for the origins of the taxes were again largely guesswork, and his suggestion of a late date of origin for most to the administrative entities found in the *landskapslagar* was probably rooted in his distrust of non-written sources. His model was attacked by Hyenstrand, who showed that it did not conform to the settlement pattern of the Viking period. He argued that there was a correspondence between administration and settlements such as *bolby*, an *andel* of *markland*, and Viking Period *helgården* or *storgården*.

Although they differ in detail, the basis of the hypotheses of Hyenstrand, Ambrosiani and Wijkander is that the administrative development of Svealand should be revealed in the archaeological record, in particular the distribution and number of settlement units, *gårdar* or *byar*, as revealed by cemeteries, and the number of 'central places', man-made mounds, high status cemeteries or runestones.[29] Hyenstrand's work of 1974, which concerned largely Svealand north of Mälar, provided the framework for their method, including data on habitation, land under cultivation and place-names.[30] Wijkander used his methods to examine Södermanland, and Ambrosiani

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[28] See Ekbom 1974. Each *folkland* was originally divided into *hunder*, as suggested by their names, and each *hund* into three *skeppslag* or *hundare*. The *folklandshund* was thus the forebear of the late medieval *härad*. He suggested that the *hundare* division of the Mälar region dated from the late Viking period as a basis for taxation of an area consisting of 100 *plogland*, when it was combined with *ledung* organisation. Calculation of taxes by *markland* closely followed this development.[28] Dividing the hundare into *attungar*, Ekbom equated each of these with an eighth of his *plogland*, although the latter existed only as a hypothetical construction of Söderlind. Ekbom further suggested that *hamnor* existed in every *hundare*; even if this was so, which is doubtful, the sixteenth-century accounts that provide the main evidence of *hamnor* indicate that his total of 120 in each was very high.

[29] Hyenstrand 1982 pp. 67–82, Ambrosiani 1964, and Wijkander 1983. Cemeteries are generally a reliable indicator up to the eleventh century. Settlement continuity can be discerned in the record from the Migration Period to the Viking Period, during which period many *gårdar* developed into *byar*.

[30] Hyenstrand 1974 p. 34.

re-examined some of Hyenstrand's results. All accepted that existing records of *Riksantikvarieämbetet* might not give a complete picture of settlement, since remains may as yet stay undiscovered, but argued that the unexcavated cemeteries could be dated roughly (for instance, to Bronze Age, Early Iron Age or Late Iron Age) by comparison with excavated ones. Having plotted the settlement pattern, an attempt was made to link this with administrative units known from written sources, the *hundare* or *skeppslag* and their assumed divisions. An assumption was made that the *hundare* would have once consisted of a uniform number of settlement units in each region (*land*, or in the case of Uppland, *folkland*), and that at some time prior to written records *hundare* boundaries had been redrawn to take account of settlement expansion.[31] Hyenstrand concluded that the latest possible period for the development of the *hundare* of the written sources was the early thirteenth century, but that it probably developed in the late Viking Period, when the early medieval settlement pattern took recognisable shape. Ambrosiani argued that the *hundare* (and the *folkland*) must have developed shortly before the erection of the eleventh-century Vallentuna (Jarlabanke) stone (U212), which mentions it.[32] By contrast, Wijkander suggested that there might have been a wholesale reform as late as the twelfth century.[33]

It is notable that in the work of Hyenstrand, Ambrosiani and Wijkander, as in that of Ekbom, ecclesiastical and secular administration and taxation were linked into one system. The *tolft* played a central

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[31] The number of units per *hundare* at the time of its creation in the Late Iron Age was assessed by Hyenstrand as approximately 100 in Attundaland, forty in Fjädrundland and sixty in Tiundaland. Ambrosiani estimated sixty for Västmanland also. Because of this discrepancy between different *land*, it was assumed that there must previously have been a uniform *hundare* throughout Svealand, named by Hyenstrand the *storhundare*, which was subsequently reformed as a result of settlement expansion in each region. The *storhundare* consisted of c. 120 units, a suitable size for the division of each *land* or *folkland* during the Vendel Period and one that might have been easily restructured into the new *hundare*. Wijkander adopted the *hund* for his hypothetical Late Iron Age and Viking Age administration, suggesting that the elite maintained control of central points, taxing the *bönder*, who became increasingly tied to their land. Others became *landbor* and helped to finance the free farmers. All, however, conceded that their own data showed exceptions to the rule in each region. Despite their acceptance of possible earlier *hund* divisions, these archaeologists have therefore sought an origin for the name *hundare* in settlement units, rather than the number of warriors in a retinue. See Wijkander 1983, pp. 87–90.

[32] Ambrosiani 1982b p. 73.

[33] Wijkander 1983 pp. 94–95.

role in all their reconstructed administrative divisions.[34] Like Hafström and others before them, they assumed that medieval ecclesiastical divisions were derived from pre-Christian administrative units.[35] Although they tested their theories against known archaeological data and their work is invaluable as evidence of continuity in settlement and centres of power, the specifics of their reconstructed administrative systems were still hypothetical, drawing on the work (some might say imagination) of previous scholars, especially Hjärne and Adolf Schück. There is no reason to assume that an increasingly strong central authority lay behind the *hundare* and subsidiary divisions, as Hyenstrand and Wijkander imply. Having constructed a system of hypothetical administrative divisions and changes that existed prior to the introduction of the *hundare*, this provided further evidence for them that a growing central authority existed, but there is no real evidence that this ever occurred. Such constant reform would have required more direction than was possible in the later

[34] Hyenstrand reconstructed an eight-*tolft hundare* of the thirteenth century, referred to as the *normal hundare*, which, he argued, to judge by the *ledung* rules of *Upplandslagen*, did not differ in any essential respect from that of the society that (he believed) developed the *ledung*, probably in the Viking Period. Leaving aside written data on the number of *gårdar* in a *by* or taxation measures, Hyenstrand attempted to show correspondences between primary units and *tolft* numbers, and his *normal hundare*. Hyenstrand's theory of an *eight-tolft hundare* could not be clearly verified by archaeology, but further research into a number of areas on the basis of ancient placenames, including some places for which there was no known evidence of settlement from cemeteries produced better results than the previous tests. Taking his lead from Hafström, he devised an origin for Rodén's *skeppslagar* as double *tolfter* taken from a former *hundare* and combined with an Attundaland *hundare*. Elsewhere, Hyenstrand concluded that large ten-*tolft hundare* had developed from the *normal hundare*, with double *tolfter* as central *socknar*, frequently those that contained *tuna*- placenames. Ambrosiani raised several questions about Hyenstrand's theory, notably his use of the first economic *härad* map in establishing the settlement pattern, and his failure to take into account changes in the coastline. Using the *ledung* rules of the later *landskapslagar*, he concluded that the administrative divisions of Uppland must have been based on the number of free men, rather than land measurement, something not explicitly stated by Hyenstrand. Wijkander also recognised that medieval ecclesiastical taxation may have had an influence on the system, and for this reason suggested combining the results of Hyenstrand, Hannerberg and Ekbom. For him, the *socken* became the primary unit of taxation (the basic purpose of all the administrative reforms) in the thirteenth century. See Hyenstrand 1974, Ambrosiani 1982b pp. 68–69, Wijkander 1983 pp. 18, 50, 131–33.

[35] Hafström, for instance, argued that the *socken* was pre-Christian, because the word *sokn* was pre-Christian. Even if it did imply gathering, it is stretching the evidence to suggest that the Old Norse (or Old English) word had the meaning of a crowd of people who collected regularly in an established place for a special purpose, as Hafström would have us believe. See Hafström 1964 pp. 1–29.

Middle Ages, let alone the Vendel or Viking Periods. Many of the complex explanations for discrepancies in their evidence can be discarded if it is accepted that 'administrative division' was more haphazard than they assume. Similarly, if it is accepted that boundaries did not always follow a rational pattern based on settlement units, there is no need to explain why this hypothetical division was replaced by a boundary system based partly on topographical boundaries by the time the *landskapslagar* were written down, in point of fact a more obvious and more easily administered system. Wijkander explains this by linking it to the introduction of taxation based on units of land, but it is difficult to see why the shifting of *hundare* boundaries would have been necessary even if such a boundary reform were manageable.[36] Ambrosiani's conclusion that *hundare* administration was based on numbers of free men presupposes that it was related to the *ledung* organisation attested only in late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sources. Like Hjärne, Hafström and others, Hyenstrand, Ambrosiani and Wijkander began with the premise that a sufficiently strong central authority existed in the Viking Period, if not earlier, to raise specified numbers of men from each *by*, rather than simply summoning local chieftains to appear with their ships.

On the basis of their statistics it is possible that the historically attested *hundare* included approximately the same number of settlement units when they were created in each *land*, although this need never have conformed to exactly one hundred, sixty or forty (as it never does in their research). As the Vallentuna rune-stone suggests, such a system could have developed partly through the initiative of local leaders who presided over judicial and cult centres, and boundaries between jurisdictions regularised by agreement, possibly at the instigation of a king such as Olof Skötkonung. Throughout history agreements involving division of territory have chosen natural features as boundaries where possible, since they provide clear markers. In Sweden boundaries were also provided by uncultivated belts of forest, later designated *allmänningar*. The king's rights to one third of these may have derived from being the 'third party' to these agreements. Regions bounded by waterways and uninhabited land usually conformed to settlement clusters and, so, generally, did traditional judicial-religious centres, often marked by features such as mounds. Local

[36] Wijkander 1983 pp. 92–93.

leaders would have been well aware of the topography and location of settlements in a wide area around them, and did not necessarily need direction from a central power to create an approximately uniform *hundare* system.

A central problem with early research into territorial division in Svealand also concerns the assumed precursor of the medieval *socken* (parish), the *tolft*, derived from *tolftkyrka* and four place-names. As Hafström himself pointed out, Tolfta in Vendel and Husby-Sjutolft in Trögd appear to have been separate from the *folkland* in some ways, yet he extended their *tolft* organisation to cover the whole region. Vendel counted as part of Tiundaland and Trögd as part of Fjädrundaland in 1314, both still divided into *tredingar* and *hamnor*.[37] However, Hafström's argument that they were therefore separate administrative regions (*småland*) as opposed to *folkland* does not necessarily follow. The differences of opinion on how the *tolft* might have fitted into an administrative framework demonstrates the problems facing scholars who accept it as an ancient division: Hafström believed that every *treding* contained four *tolfter*, Hjarne that every *tolft* contained six *hamnor*, each divided into two *tolfter*, and Lundberg that *tolft* and *treding* were one and the same in Trögd.[38] There is in fact nothing to suggest that *tolft* was an ancient precursor to the *socken*. On the contrary, Rahmqvist has indicated that it was a term for secondary *socknar* created as a result of settlement expansion around the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[39]

Hafström and Ståhle linked the *socken* itself with supposedly earlier administrative divisions, suggesting that it was based on an older *skeppslagsfjärding* and the *åtting* respectively.[40] Although Hafström's theory was accepted by some, it has been attacked by Adolf Schück, Mats Larsson and Smedberg, among others, and is now generally rejected.[41] Even before Hafström developed his theory, Josef Westin had showed that *socken* boundaries had no link to *skeppslag* division in Ångermanland.[42] Thirty years later Smedberg demonstrated that there was a distinct regional variation in the pattern of *socknar*, and

[37] DS 1146–1147.
[38] B. Lundberg 1972 p. 90. Hjärne 1947. pp. 9–10. Hafström 1949 p. 99.
[39] See Rahmqvist 1996 p. 54, and 1982 pp. 93–94.
[40] Hafström 1949 p. 101, and Ståhle 1948 p. 137.
[41] See A. Schück 1950 pp. 485–87, and M.G. Larsson 1987 pp. 75–77.
[42] Westin 1943 pp. 23–24.

that there was no clear link between ecclesiastical and secular administration in Uppland.[43] Göransson came to the same conclusion with regard to Öland.[44] Although the majority of churches constructed in the tenth and early eleventh centuries in Scandinavia may have been private ones, many churches were subsequently built to serve specific *bygder* (settlements), and *socknar* were later created around these—as a result there was likely to be some correspondence between *socken* boundaries and secular administrative divisions that were also based on *bygder*, but this was not exact.[45]

Socken formation (and perhaps the introduction of the word *sokn* to mean a congregation) has frequently been linked with the enforcement of *tionde* collection. The advent of ecclesiastical taxation required more precise boundaries and administration—prior to that most churches were built by wealthy landowners, who gave hospitality to priests and bishops. They received payment for their services, a practice Adam of Bremen thoroughly disapproved of.[46] The drive to make churches more self-sufficient through the raising of ecclesiastical taxes was connected to Pope Gregory VII's attempt to free the Church as a whole from secular interference. The *tionde* was introduced into Iceland in 1096–97, and was collected in Denmark by 1135. It may also have been collected in Norway by that time, but was certainly introduced when Nicholas Brekespear visited in 1152–53. The evidence for early church organisation on Gotland is better than that for mainland Sweden, and shows that the establishment of *socknar* over the whole island was a slow process.[47] The consensus among historians of Sweden's ecclesiastical history is that *socken* formation began in the twelfth century and continued into the late thirteenth, when northern parts of Uppland were organised into *socknar*, and even later in regions to the north of this.[48] During the process, many churches did not become *socken* churches and were abandoned, while some new ones were built. This ecclesiastical district organisation was quite separate from secular administrative organisation. The tale of the ancient *tolft* demonstrates the inherent dangers in reconstructing

[43] Smedberg 1982 pp. 46–49.
[44] Göransson 1982 p. 105.
[45] See, for example, Brink 1990 p. 120.
[46] ABG 4:31, p. 264.
[47] Yrwing 1978 p. 87.
[48] Hermann Schück 1959 p. 199.

hypothetical administrative systems; it is possible to take names from different eras and different administrative systems, ecclesiastical and secular, military and judicial, and combine them in one through mathematical manipulation, since all naturally correspond to some extent to the settlement pattern.

Unfortunately the administrative edifices constructed by earlier scholars have contributed little to our knowledge of administration in the twelfth century. Knut Eriksson is unlikely to have had sufficient power and resources to enforce the wholesale boundary reform that Wijkander suggested might have occurred in his reign. The origins of the *hundare* will remain a matter for debate, but it is known that it existed before the reign of Sverker, because it appears on the Vallentuna runestone. It has been argued that Olof Skötkonung might have been responsible for the introduction of the *hund/hundare* to Svealand, as well as the *tredingar*, since he attempted to introduce several other reforms based on English practice, such as the use of coinage.[49] It has even been suggested that Knud the Great, Olof's overlord and king of England from 1016 to 1035, was behind the *hundare* reform; if some *svear* and *götar* who served him were called *tegnar* (thegns) on the English model, why should the *hundare* not have been inspired by the English hundred?[50] This presupposes that the *folkland* are older than the *hund* division, and therefore had different names when it was introduced, in this case in the early eleventh century.[51] It is not impossible that, with cooperation from local landowners and the threat of Knud behind him, Olof could have initiated a change in the organisation of the region that took into account the existing power structure. But he spent most of his reign in Västergötland, and there is little sign that his influence extended far beyond Sigtuna in northern Svealand. It may also be asked why the name *härad* was not adopted in northern Svealand, if these administrative reforms were introduced by a *göta* king of both *svear* and

[49] For instance, by Ros 2002/3 pp. 161–76.

[50] See Gräslund 1986 p. 230. Löfving is also taken by the idea that Knud might have wielded his power in this way after the victory of Helgeå: see Löfving 2001a p. 72.

[51] Ros 2003 p. 170. He cites Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis* and Snorri Sturlusson's *Ynglinga saga*, referring to Birka, Sigtuna and Uppsala as regions, which could have been Attundaland, Fjärdrundaland and Tiundaland respectively. The *folkland* would thus have been named after their most important settlements, like the English shires.

götar. As for Knud, there seems no particular reason why he should have been interested in renaming, let alone reforming, the districts of Svealand, a completely different matter from calling a few coastal landowners of his *lið* thegns. Knud spent most of his reign in England, and returned to the Baltic only temporarily when there was a threat of cessation of tribute.

The Vallentuna rune-stone tells us that the *hundare* was a *ting* district. Its inscription says clearly that Jarlabanke set up this *ting* himself, which suggests that the administrative *hundare* system owed at least as much to local initiative as it did to any central direction. It seems likely that judicial and administrative units were expanded on the traditional pattern when the need arose because of the creation of new settlements. Kings (elected from outside the region or from among the local nobility) may have played their part by initiating change, but so may wealthy local men, possibly those enriched by overseas military expeditions or trade during the Viking Period. The *folkland* and *hundare/härad* divisions of the *landskap* could not have been centrally imposed without local agreement between chieftains, particularly in the relatively settlement-dense regions of Svealand, where the nobility remained jealously independent until the mid-thirteenth century. Local and haphazard growth of *hundare* units provides an explanation for their varying size and wealth, and there is no reason to assume that they were once more uniform. The *hundare* may have been the district of a chieftain and his 'hundred men' in origin, but this term, whether adopted from the Romans or Carolingians or not, need not have meant literally one hundred men. The chieftains who supervised local *ting* meetings would also have had their own ships and warrior retinue, but this does not constitute the *ledung* of the law codes.

There is no possibility of dating the division of Svealand into *hundare* or the rest of settled Sweden into *härader*. The latter clearly existed in Skåne by 1085, but this date gives no clue to when the different regions of Denmark might have been divided. Estimates of when the *hundare* appeared in Svealand have varied between the Migration Period and the twelfth century. The district name *härad* was probably adopted at a time when Danish influence was strong in Götaland, but much weaker in Svealand. How the different name was adopted in Svealand, whether it was earlier or later than this, or whether it was a conscious decision to differ from Danish practice, will never be known. Although it is likely that the names appeared

before the two regions were united as one kingdom, even this cannot be certain, as the separate *land* could still create their own law-codes as late as the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, codes that still exhibit a Svealand-Götaland divide. On the other hand, names on rune-stones suggest that lands were held by some families in both Östergötland and Södermanland as early as the Viking Period; if so, close political and social links between these regions would have developed well before the twelfth century and the same powerful landowners would presumably have had an influence over the naming of local districts. If not a mistake, it is interesting in this respect that Adam of Bremen wrote that the *götar* inhabited an area extending as far north as Birka.[52]

The numbers of Uppland *hundare* as they appeared in 1314 do not correspond to the numbers eight, four and ten *hunder*, as indicated by the *folkland* names, being eight, five and twelve. Three of the names of these *hundare* end in *-hund* (or *-und*), fourteen in *-hundare*, and eight in neither. Any replacement of *hund* by *hundare* need not have been sudden or systematic; it is possible, for instance, that new *ting* districts created as a result of expanding settlement began to be named *hundare*, and the name subsequently superseded *hund* in some of the older districts. All three of the *folkland* of Uppland (as it became later) are named in a corrupt Latin form in the Florence document of c. 1120, as *Tindia, Fedundria* and *Atanht*.[53] In the early thirteenth century *Attundaland*, *Fiæprundaland* and *Tiundaland* appear more often, and the two larger *folkland* retained their own *lagmän* at the end of the thirteenth century, even after *Upplandslagen* was codified. Nevertheless, the exceptional provisions of this law-code refer to the special status of the coastal belt, Rodén, rather than any differences between *folkland*.

On the basis of name type Andersson divided *härader* into two groups, those which originally contained the element *hæraþ* and those which did not. The latter type he considered to be settlement regions that were made *härader* after being named. The first group of place-names, Gullbergs (*Gulbærgh*) in Östergötland being one example, either contain the name of a *ting* place or of another regional name as the first component, *härad* being the second. The second group are clearly

[52] ABG 4:14.

[53] The same source also lists *Guasmannia* (Västermanland), *Sundermannia* (Södermanland) and *Nerh* (Närke).

settlement district names, such as Kind or Vadsbo (*Vaþsbo*). Some contain both, and it is therefore difficult to determine whether they were named before becoming administrative districts called *härader*. The *-bo* suffix occurs as part of some placenames in both groups, deriving from *-boe*, 'inhabitant'.[54]

The distinction is clearest in medieval Småland (which included Kind and Ydre, now in Östergötland), where the central and south-eastern regions, Niudung, Värend and Möre, have *härad* names of the first type, and have clearly been divided up into *härader*. In Niudung and Möre these are named simply western and eastern and northern and southern *härader* respectively. Finvider is similarly divided into districts named Västbo, Östbo and Sunderbo, but this division seems to be earlier as the districts are not named 'härad'. The *-bo* named settlements occur frequently as central localities in Småland and Götaland, and often as *kungsgårdar*, meeting places or *ting* places in medieval sources, and are thought by many to have been the equivalent of the *husabyar* of Svealand and some regions of Götaland. In Västgötaland the majority of medieval *härad* names are older pre-*härad* division district names, whereas in Östergötland they are almost all named *härad*, the first part of the *härad* name invariably being a *ting* place in the western part of the *landskap*.

The situation of Öland was exceptional in that its *härader* were considerably smaller than the norm, and especially by comparison with those of the nearest region, Småland. Although the *härad* is not named in connection with Öland before 1281, it is clearly considerably older, estimated by Sölve Göransson as eleventh-century.[55] The boundaries of ecclesiastical *socknar*, presumably fully established by the mid-twelfth century, did not conform to the *härad* boundaries.[56] Göransson suggests that, like those of western Östergötland, names of the northern Öland *härader* were taken from local *ting* centres, such as Åkerbo (from Äkersberg at Vi, Källa *socken*). If this is so, the basis of their establishment was probably judicial, in so far as this aspect can be separated from the religious or political. The name 'Vi' implies a pagan cult centre. Other Öland *ting*-place names were

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[54] T. Andersson 1982a p. 58.

[55] Göransson 1982 pp. 109–12.

[56] On Öland there was also an ecclesiastical division into two *mot*, north and south, connected with the synods, and presumably a product of the long and narrow shape of the island. They are not attested before 1346 and were not used for any secular purposes until the late fifteenth century.

taken from local churches, but may have been named differently before Christianisation; if other *härader* such as Slätbo were named in the same manner as Åkerbo, the original place-names have been lost. Most Öland *härader* take their names from central *byar*, some known to have changed their names in the late Viking Period, such as Möckleby, after which Möcklebo was named (the village having probably been named Långenäs earlier).[57] The *ting* places of both Möcklebo and Gorbo *härad* were not close to their central *byar*. Göransson argues that the central-southern *härad* division and its subsidiary *attungar* were introduced in connection with the activities of the *svear*, for which Svibo (Svea-bo), at the southern end of the island, also provides evidence.[58] There is no way of dating the name Svibo, but it may well be older than the *härader*. It is also highly improbable that the *härad*, which did not exist in the Mälar region, was introduced as a result of northern influence, although existing administrative divisions may have been utilised or even regulated as a result of it. Whether it was the Swedish kingdom that refortified and used Eketorp (probably the 'Gräsgård' named in thirteenth-century sources) as early as the eleventh century is also impossible to say, and the fort has no clear parallel with the Danish Viking-Age fortifications in Skåne, as Göransson suggested.[59] *Härader* may have been introduced to the whole of Öland in the eleventh century, and some subsequently renamed.

As observed by Andersson, the primary consideration for division into districts which correspond to regions using a certain *ting* place would be ease of travel and communication to that place; hence the districts tend to correspond to distinct areas of settlement, and are not necessarily equal in size or resources. Since the new *härader* and *hundare* cannot have been imposed by a central authority against the will of the local nobility, whose spheres of influence would also be expected to conform to settlement patterns, this would also militate against equality in size or wealth. The *härad* and *hundare* 'reforms' in Svealand and Götaland may represent no more than a renaming of many local districts, but one that nevertheless recognises an emerging

[57] Hellberg 1979 p. 45.
[58] Göransson 1982 p. 110.
[59] Gräsgård is first named in two bishop's letters of 1279, DS 661 and 662. See also Blomkvist 1972 pp. 49–50; Fritz 1972 p. 322.

state through imposing some conformity in nomenclature. In some areas of Småland the division may have been imposed, in the same way that this region became subject to *Östgötalagen*, as landowners and settlers from Östergötland occupied the comparatively empty regions, but those areas that were already settled in the Iron Age presumably adopted the *härad* from neighbouring regions, whether from Götaland or Blekinge. Regional differences remained into the post-medieval era. The growth of administration in medieval kingdoms was gradual and it was not possible to obliterate existing customs and structures, so they were constantly adapted. For this reason the most important administrative unit in Dalarna became the *treding*, and in Hälsingland the *skeppslag*.

The *hundare* and *härader*, Latin *provincia*, appear in written sources from the late thirteenth century onwards. Both are regions with defined boundaries, but the terms appear in various contexts, usually as an instrument of government, but sometimes as a geographical expression or representing the people living within the region. In *Upplandslagen* the *hundare* was the primary unit responsible for the raising of taxes, both secular and ecclesiastical, and for the raising of the military fleet levy, the *ledung*. There are good reasons to believe that this was not the purpose for which the *hundare* was originally created, and it is most likely that, as in the case of the Götaland *härad*, its original function was primarily judicial, in the sense that the districts of the Icelandic Commonwealth were, a mechanism for preventing chaos. Each of the Swedish districts had a *tingplats*, and constituted a *tingslag*, the region for which the district *ting* (court) was responsible.[60] Much of the confusion over how different sub-divisions of the *hundare* which appear in *Upplandslagen* fit with each other derives from their origin in different administrative systems and their subsequent use for purposes for which they were not originally created. In addition careless use of terminology or confusion among those who codified the law may have added to the problems of the scholar.

[60] UL, R 1: Preface.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TAXATION AND THE MILITARY *LEDUNG*

7.1. *Land ownership*

A prerequisite for the growth of royal administration and power is the existence of taxation. Agricultural production dominated the medieval economy of Sweden. The land was farmed by *bönder*, who owned the land they farmed and paid taxes to the king, or *landbor*, who paid rent (*avrad*) to the owner of their land. The difference between the two categories was not always as clear as it might seem, but generally tax *bönder* had greater right to the land they farmed and its inheritance than the *landbor*. The latter class of farmers appeared during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the same period there was a considerable variation in the wealth of the *bönder*—only later did the term come to mean something akin to 'peasants', but the decline in the status of the term began then. From the reign of Magnus Ladulås onwards the transformation of those with means into the *frälse* differentiated them clearly from other freemen, who paid taxes. The detail of precisely how and when these taxes and different tax units came into existence has been much discussed, because of the inadequate source material. In the high Middle Ages, as the influence of Roman law increased, different rights of land usage were introduced; the right to live on it, the right to use it, the right to rent it and the right to tax it. With the advent of writing rights to property could be set down, and kings ultimately gained the right to define rights to property, for instance, to grant land, to confirm the rights of those who had lost the written evidence of rights to land, and to guarantee the rights of subjects.[1]

The Swedish law-codes retain elements of a system of land ownership that existed in the Viking Period and probably earlier, in the form of *bordsrätt*. The purpose of this was to defend the right of a

[1] Harding 2002 pp. 13–22.

family to its ancestral property. It has been argued that the concept of 'ownership' in the Scandinavian Iron Age would have been fundamentally different from that of the Middle Ages, perhaps akin to those found in chieftain societies of more recent times.[2] There are many recorded examples from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries of misunderstanding between these and European traders and colonists, which arose because the natives regarded land as somehow inalienable, owned by the gods, whereas Europeans regarded ownership as transferred in return for gifts—in their eyes, by sale. As noted in Chapter 4, there is no doubt that the advent of written laws derived from Roman law changed the way in which land was disposed of, and ultimately ensured that the right to land was grounded in law and the existence of written contracts. Nevertheless, it is evident that a concept of possession, deriving from the continuous occupation and farming of a specific area, did exist in Scandinavia during the later Iron Age.[3]

Ultimately, an inherited right to possession of land by a social unit, whether close family, extended family or larger community, derives from the advent of agriculture and fixed settlement. As early as the Neolithic Era the burial of ancestors in graves marked by dolmens may have acted as markers for the occupation of land by their kinsfolk.[4] In an oral society each monument would have told a story, just as each name in a genealogical list had a story behind it. In the Scandinavian Iron Age the existence of ancestral burials in conspicuous graves such as mounds probably also served as proof of a family's possession of land and added a sacral dimension to it. There is good archaeological evidence of a change in culture at the end of the Roman Iron Age that may have accompanied new concepts of ownership and inheritance. Deposition of valuable prestige items in lakes and marshes ended—instead they were retained as wealth to be passed on. Villages and land divisions such as fences began to appear, apparently for purposes other than enclosure of animals.[5]

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[2] Löfving 2001a p. 118.

[3] Burn-beat agriculture, as practised in certain parts of Scandinavia, required the constant moving of fields, but these were usually in the vicinity of a fixed settlement site.

[4] Tilley 1996 pp. 157–66.

[5] Randsborg 1990 p. 117.

Later, in the late Viking and early medieval periods, there was a further increase in the number of villages, as secondary ones (*torpar*) were created on outlying land surrounding the original *by*. It is possible that division of land among descendants, creating small plots that could be divided no further, compelled communities to create new settlements. In Sweden land possessed by small farmers remained as small and scattered plots until the reforms of the nineteenth century. In the High Middle Ages far fewer *byar* were created than in the Iron Age and Viking Periods, but many new *gårdar* were established in cleared forest.

In the Viking Period the practice of recording a claim to land in writing appeared for the first time, in the form of runes. Although the vast majority of rune-stones were commissioned by Christians, it seems unlikely that their idea of land ownership differed from their pagan neighbours, since conversion cannot have changed this overnight. The practice of listing ancestors (sometimes as many as five or six generations) in runes had been rare before this, although a few rune-stones belong to the Migration and Vendel Periods. In those periods, and conceivably earlier, we may assume that family pedigrees were committed to memory. In the Scandinavian Viking Period the enumeration of a family's forefathers was necessary to prove its right to its *oðal*, the ancestral land. This was as true of kings as it was of lesser *bönder*. In late medieval Norway the whole realm was considered the *oðal* of its kings, who took pains to emphasise their descent from St Olaf, characterised as *rex perpetuus Norvegiae* by the late twelfth century.[6] Despite the existence of *oðal*, there are runic records of sale of land from the Viking Period.[7] This may have been a relatively new phenomenon, but, as with other aspects of ownership that can be discerned in the late Viking Period, we have no way of knowing when it began.

The *landskapslagar* refer to *byrþ* (*börd*, kinship), the right of a friend or associate to obtain land when immediate family that can inherit are lacking, or be offered it first if it should be sold outside the immediate family, provided they can prove that they are kin of the

[6] The earliest source that calls Olaf this is *Historia Norvegiae*. The emphasis placed on this descent was evident, for instance, at the coronation of Magnus Erlingsson in 1163/64.

[7] For instance, U209m at Veda in Uppland, which records how Torsten became rich in Gårdarike (Rus) and 'bought this *gård*'.

deceased.[8] This was later referred to as *bordsrätt*. If land was sold outside the family an *ätteman* had to take part in the sale. As a general rule, therefore, it was preferable that land should not be sold outside the kin-group, and the transfer of land was a family matter, not one for an individual. In the shorter *Gutalagen* it is similarly stated that relatives or *ättemän* can buy land, but this is followed by the statement that land must never be bought by anyone outside the *ätt*.[9] These laws corresponded to others that seem to assume an extended family living in a restricted area, by which a family was to pursue the matter if a member of it was killed, or was held responsible if one of its kin killed someone. The second *flock* of *Östgötalagen's Jordabalken* even states that when there is a dispute over land between *bonde* and king, the *bonde* always has the *vitsord*. This *flock* might be interpreted as one inserted to favour wealthy landowners in disputes with the king, but in *Västgötalagen's Jordabalk* there is also a statement that the bishop has *vitsord* before the king, *ländermän* before the bishop, and the *bonde* before them all.[10] It appears that both were originally intended to ensure that all free farmers could retain their land, whatever their social status.

Laws of this nature are clearly not simply derived from the Mosaic-Roman tradition, and must have hindered transfers of land to the Church and the aspirations of the new nobility of the thirteenth century, the *frälse*, if not their forebears. Even in the Viking Period there was considerable variation in size of *gårdar*. The larger ones may have been owned by extended families or individuals. No doubt, apart from the simple use of superior force, there were ways of circumventing the laws or acquiring land through marriage and manipulating genealogies, just as chiefs and kings did in medieval Ireland. It is probable, as happened in medieval Iceland, that many free farmers were forced into a client relationship with wealthier and more powerful *bönder*. The wealth acquired by some during this period must have created more inequality. Some chieftains such as Jarlabanke claimed to possess large tracts of land, while Östman claimed to

[8] Such a person was a *byrþaman*, and the verb for proving their right to the land on the basis of kinship was *byrþa*. See VgL 1, J3, VgL 2, J4, J5 and Add. 11:7, and ÖgL J3 and J4.

[9] GL 28:3.

[10] VgL J5.

have sufficient authority to Christianise Jämtland. In the High Middle Ages changes such as the introduction of the two- or three-field system, the *solskifte* and measured land units (see below) will have disrupted traditional land divisions. Individuals were able to donate land to the Church, presumably often without much opposition. Nevertheless, the existence of *bördsrätt* may have been the cause of many disputes about the ownership of ecclesiastical property, records of some of these having survived to this day.

7.2. *The Growth of Taxation and Valued Land Units*

In any of its various forms, whether exacted by king, Church or nobility, taxation may not have been general in Sweden until the thirteenth century. The *tionde* (tithe) demanded by the Church was probably introduced into Sweden at the close of the eleventh century, but problems persisted with its collection. The *peterspenning* was obviously not collected in many regions as late as 1153, when a letter of Pope Anastasius III called for its enforcement.[11] Nor is there any clear evidence of the *avrad* (rent) paid to the land-owing nobility before this, although an important component in the 'feudal' system, the rent-paying *landbor*, was in existence by the twelfth century, and thereafter increased in number.[12] Early taxes in Sweden had a variety of forms and origins, differing markedly by region. Folke Dovring made the useful distinction that they were either taken from a district or from a single person or group of people. The first type is more likely to have been imposed by government.

The *avrad* was paid by the individual in return for the right to work the land, and was related to the size and production capacity of his land. Records of these payments exist in the form of *jordeböcker* (land registers), two of which date to the thirteenth century, from Sko monastery in Uppland and Fogdö in Södermanland. In

[11] Collection of the *tionde* and its sending to Rome were requested of Inge and Halfstan (*Visigothorum regibus*) and Bishop Rodulvard by Gregory VII in 1080 (DS 25). In 1153 Anastasius III called for Sverker and leading men to spread church learning, allow the Church freedom from military service and tax, and asked for collection of *peterspenning* (DS 38). This was reiterated in 1161 by Alexander III, who also mentioned the *tionde* (DS 41). See Palme 1959 p. 27, Ekbom 1974 pp. 245–52, 1981 p. 83.

[12] Lindkvist 1979 pp. 51–56.

the thirteenth century the land was measured in *attunger* and *markland*. In Uppland after 1250 the *avrad* was fixed for a *by* or a given number of *byar*, according to measured areas of land, the *markland* and its subdivisions.[13] How old these land divisions were has been a matter for much discussion. In his study of medieval noble landholdings in Uppland, Rahmqvist showed that, contrary to the assumptions of most scholars before him, many of the large noble estates of the late Middle Ages did exist before 1300.[14] He also demonstrated that whereas *avrad* from older *bolbyar* was paid in money and produce, that of the newer *torp*, tenant holdings on marginal land, often meadowland, was paid only in money.[15]

In contrast to the Svealand *landskapslagar*, those of Götaland lack details of taxation. This might seem to imply that regulation of taxation was less important there than in Svealand, whether because Svealand was the richest and most important region, the centre of the realm by 1296 when *Upplandslagen* was codified, or because there had been fewer problems in raising finances in Götaland. However, it is also possible that the defeat of the rebels of 1247–48 and 1251 provided an opportunity for the introduction of new taxes in Svealand, where the *ledung*, primarily an institution of Svealand, provided a framework for relief taxes in place of the fleet levy (see below). Written laws of the High Middle Ages often dealt in most detail with innovative procedures, or those devised to handle new problems, rather than customary procedures that still served their purpose. Just as law was primarily enforced within the local community, in matters of dispute the level of taxation was determined through the *tingslag*. In a dispute over lands in Tuna in Österåkers *socken*, which took place at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the size of the *jordetal* was fixed by a *nämnd* of twelve which included 'Birger Petersson, the knights Ulf Saxesson and Finvid Nilsson, the dean of Uppsala, the *fogde* of Stockholm and several others, *väpnare* and *bönder*, who live in the region'.[16]

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[13] Rahmqvist 1996 p. 38. 1 markland = 8 öresland = 24 örtugland = 192 penningland (1 öresland = 3 örtugland, 1 örtugland = 8 penningland).

[14] These were concentrated in Vendel, Björklinge, Lena, Film and Tensta *socknar*. The majority of the land in the rest of Uppland was dominated by *bönder*, who owned their own land and paid taxes directly to the king. See Rahmqvist 1996, pp. 70–76, 92–94.

[15] UL Jordabalk 1. Rahmqvist 1996 pp. 36–37.

[16] DS 2532.

Neither extant version of *Västgötalagen* contains much information on taxation. However, a late redaction of the later *Västgötalagen*, possibly deriving from one of the early fourteenth century, mentions two taxes, *gengärd* and *allmänningsore*.[17] Other information can be extracted from later land registers (*jordeböcker*). The first systematic register for the whole realm was made in 1530, but there is also an extant tax register (*skattebok*) from 1413. Prior to this most records of taxation were ecclesiastical. Records were kept of the *peterspenning* and *tionde*. Although these tell us little of crown taxation as such, they have been used to calculate the size of population and number of tax districts in c. 1300.[18] The *Viennetionde* of the early fourteenth century was levied on all ecclesiastical resources, being taken from the *kanikprependa*. This included both the *tionde* and income from land and possessions. However, it is not clear whether this amounted to one tenth of all real income, in other words, a tenth of total income, or was taken as a tenth of the income from each *socken*. Both were levied as full or half taxes, the full amount being taken from those who owned livestock and crops to the value of three marks or more. Payment was made by households. The *gengärd* derived from the ancient requirement of households to give board and lodging to the king or his servants (*gästningsrätt*), but the origin of the *allmänningsore* is less clear. Its name suggests that it was paid by all men, there being no obvious relationship to common land (*allmänningsjord*). Exactly when *gengärd* became a tax and *allmänningsore* took the form it has in the later *Västgötalagen* cannot be established—the best that can be said is that both were probably well established by the time this law text appeared, since there are clear regulations on dealing with those who avoid payment.[19]

Payment of *gengärd* and *allmänningsore* was not restricted to Västergötland, but extended as far as Småland in the east, although in judicial matters Småland was subject to *Östgötalagen*. The *gengärd* also existed in Östergötland and Södermanland. Dovring has researched a wide variety of taxes in Götaland, known largely from fifteenth and sixteenth-century sources. He argues that many, such as the Easter tax, must have originated much earlier, perhaps as payment

[17] See Helle 1996 pp. 134–38.
[18] Especially Lönnroth 1940, and Ekbom 1974.
[19] VgL2, Fornämesbalken.

to the crown by those who worked common land. Another listed tax was the tribute of forty marks paid to a newly elected king by each *härad*.[20] What Dovring's research does indicate is that an assortment of local taxes must have existed during the medieval period, often restricted to parts of Götaland, for which no contemporary evidence exists. The reason for this may be, as Thomas Lindkvist has suggested, that there was less need for regulation of taxation there than in Svealand, where a new system was imposed relatively quickly.[21]

Below the *hundare* and *härad* the districts responsible for collection of taxes varied in different regions. The *attung* is encountered in written sources dating from the early 1200s. Its name implies that it was an eighth, but its origin is obscure, although a number of scholars thought it to be an eighth of a *by*.[22] In *Västgötalagen* it appears in sections dealing with the upkeep of mills, fences and bridges. It is clear from the later *Västgötalagen* that the *attung* is outside the *by*, sometimes a measurement of land and sometimes a plot of land.[23] Most references to *attungar* refer to use of land between *byar*. 'Attungsrätt' is used to refer to the right of access and use of common land.[24] The relative importance of animal husbandry in the medieval economy of Västergötland is emphasised by the stipulation that four routes should remain open for cattle in each *attung*.[25] Lönnroth's view that this usage represents an older meaning of *attung* than that which we know of in Östergötland may be correct, as it would parallel the older *härad* names and the general view that Västergötland remained something of a backwater in medieval Sweden, with less agricultural land and less development of towns.

In Östergötland and on Öland *attung* appears as a general division of land for valuation and taxation purposes, which was levied on the household. Whether this *attung* developed from something similar to that of *Västgötalagen* is difficult to say. The *Byggningabalk* of *Östgötalagen* makes it clear that the *attung* was a specified ('geometrical')

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[20] ÖgL DrB 5:1.

[21] Lindkvist 1988 pp. 20–23.

[22] For instance SLL 1, commentary to ÖgL Bb, pp. 229–30. They were following earlier theories expounded by Hans Hildebrand, G. Thulin and E.O. Arenander. See Lönnroth 1940 pp. 72–75 for a summary of these opinions.

[23] VgL1, J7:3 and J14, VgL2, J19 and J33.

[24] For instance, VgL2, Kk 2, referring to the rights of the church.

[25] VgL1, J8. See also rules for grazing of cattle in VgL2, J23, J29 and J33.

land measurement.[26] As on Öland, this consisted of 24 *alnar* (*aln* being a cubit). The *ledungslama* of western Östergötland and Öland was levied on the basis of the *attung*, in other words, the land area the *bonde* owned; but this does not necessarily mean that the *attung* was introduced for this purpose. It seems more likely that traditional land divisions were utilised by the central authority and adapted to the needs of central taxation at some stage during the later thirteenth century or possibly after, when the *ledung* was transformed into a system of relief taxes. In western Östergötland, probably Öland too, the 'hamna' paid one Gotland mark, and corresponded to eight *attungar*.[27] The *hamna* does not appear in any written source concerning medieval Öland, but the *ledungslama* was still called 'höö och hamp' in the sixteenth century, and groups of *bönder* were referred to as a 'skiplagh' in Magnus Ladulås's 1281 statute on payments required for the new castle at Borgholm.[28] These names, *hamna* and *skeppslag*, were derived from Svealand and must have been used to relate the two systems. In western Östergötland, which had no access to the sea, taxes based on the *ledung* system must have been imposed late in the thirteenth century, but in Öland there may well have been a military *ledung* levy a century before this.

The *attung* already existed in the early thirteenth century, since a letter from the 1230s or 40s tells us that fifteen *tön* of corn was sowed in each and every *attung*. Since *attungar* are donated and sold in letters dating from around 1200, it is likely that they existed as land measurements by that date.[29] Later even cattle, forest and fishing waters were reckoned in *attungar*.[30] Several documents give fixed monetary values. In a letter of 1286 a list of donations to several monasteries and nunneries in Sweden values each fourth of an *attung* at four marks, in other words, a whole *attung* at sixteen.[31] In *Östgötalagen* the *avrad* for each *attung* was set at four *tön* of corn (half a mark or two days' work).[32] The fixed *avrad*, measured in land, goes back at least to the reign of Knut Eriksson, as witnessed by donation

[26] ÖgL B 2:1.
[27] Dovring 1947 pp. 130–33, and 1951 pp. 25–26, 323–341.
[28] DS 736, Göransson 1982 p. 105.
[29] DS 115, DS 526.
[30] DS 1321.
[31] DS 910.
[32] ÖgL B 9.

letters.[33] In assorted documents the value of an *attung* varies, but it remains the basic unit in calculations of rent, sale and exchange. It does appear, however, that the *attung* varied considerably in size between different *landskap* where it existed in this capacity. In *Södermannalagen's Kyrkobalk* an *attung* corresponds to one and a half *öresland*, whereas it is three in the *Egnasalbalk* of *Östgötalagen*'.[34] Elsewhere in both law codes there are other comparative values that do not correspond either with each other or to these.

Holmbäck and Wessén, while admitting that its origin is unknown, suggested that the measured *attung* owed its origin to state regulation for the purposes of taxation or the raising of the *ledung*.[35] Göransson has come to the same conclusion with regard to Öland, where the land division of the later medieval period was highly regulated, each *härad* consisting of eighty *attungar*.[36] Given Öland's strategic location off the coast at the southern limit of Sweden's historical extent, it is very likely that it functioned as a Rods bo, as Schück contended.[37] The differences mentioned above indicate that the *attung* developed separately in different *landskap*, but there is only one reference to it in Uppland. Eric Lönnroth suggested that the difference in character between Västergötland and Östergötland *attungar* related to land usage.[38] In eastern Sweden farmed land and its ownership were of overriding importance by 1300. This in itself might have led to the dominance of a single form of measurement for purposes of exchange and sale, although Lönnroth argued that the division of land as a result of the introduction of the two-field system in eastern Sweden meant that land was no longer so easily measured in meadows or fields as it was in Västergötland.[39] The period 1130–1300

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[33] Lönnroth 1940 p. 106, Dovring 1947 pp. 67–68, 128–29.

[34] ÖgL Egnasalbalk, 3:2, SdmL Kk, 2.

[35] SLL 1, *Östgötalagen* Byggningabalk, commentary on pp. 229–30.

[36] Göransson 1982 pp. 98–101.

[37] Henrik Schück 1914 1–37 (p. 33). See Chapter 7, pp. 170–71: *bo* frequently occurs as a place-name component and the term seems to have designated land under royal administration in Götaland. The name *Rod* indicates a connection with the king's *ledung* fleet: see this chapter, 7:3.

[38] Lönnroth 1940 p. 80.

[39] After 1000 AD the two-field system (with fallow every second year) dominated in eastern Sweden. The infield system (with annual cropping), as used during the Viking Period, continued in use in northern Sweden, Småland and southern Västergötland throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The ard also remained the preferred ploughing instrument, as opposed to the plough, which was used only in Värmland and northern Västergötland, its use having spread to there from

was in any case a period of relative prosperity, in which agricultural land expanded into previously forested areas throughout most of Sweden, aided by technical advances in implements.[40]

By the time the extant law codes were written down the most important measurement of land in Svealand was the *markland*. As usual, more than one theory has been developed for both the time and the nature of its development. Schlyter argued that it was the land for which a landbo paid one mark silver in avrad.[41] Sandström argued against such theories, suggesting that the advent of *markland* was related to *bördsrätt*, the hereditary right to own land. He cites two letters of Archbishop Stefan and Knut Eriksson from the years 1164–67 as evidence that *markland* existed as a fixed land measurement as early as the mid-twelfth century. The letters concern a dispute between the archbishop's son Gere and a nun, apparently arising out of a scandalous relationship. It concerns three marks worth of *avrad*, which Lönnroth argued was not the later *markland*.[42] Stefan's letter, like that of Pope Honorius III to the dean of the church of St Marie in Hagby, Uppland (1220, also cited by Sandström) concerns ownership of land, but neither names *markland* or its subdivisions. Knut's confirmation letter for the first does, however, list *öresland* and *örtugar*. The *markland* appears more frequently in written sources only after the mid-thirteenth century, Lönnroth considering it to have displaced the *attung*, which appears (as *octonarius*) in a donation letter of Sverker II from 1200. Sandström argued that this was not the *attung* that existed in Södermanland or Östergötland.[43]

The question is whether the *markland* was introduced by the king after 1250 as an instrument of taxation, or appeared earlier, either for the reason Sandström suggested or for the same reasons the *attung* appeared in Götaland. Given the fragmentary nature of Uppland's landholdings in the majority of the *landskap*, it is unlikely that a *landskap*-wide reform could have been imposed there, except perhaps on the king's land, but the arrival of the *markland* for the convenience of the local nobility, perhaps before the mid-twelfth century, cannot

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Norway in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See Myrdal 1997 pp. 155–58, 166 and 1999 pp. 51–63, Widgren 1997 pp. 173–92.

[40] Myrdal 1999 pp. 42–79.

[41] Schlyter 1877 pp. 433–437.

[42] DS 51 and DS 63.

[43] Sandström 1942 pp. 124–25.

be ruled out. The *solskifte*, the division of farmed land into strips to be allocated to farmsteads, was probably introduced for the convenience of landowners, although the only surviving documents ordering this division concern land owned by ecclesiastical institutions.[44] Göransson argues that the division was not regulated until late in the thirteenth century, and may not have been fully regulated when *Upplandslagen* and *Östgötalagen* were codified, hence their strict and detailed regulation of it. However, *Upplandslagen* states that anyone owning a quarter of a village may impose it, suggesting that imposition was possible only for relatively wealthy landowners or by voluntary agreement.[45] *Östgötalagen* gives no evidence of imposition, but details how such land division should be carried out.[46] Neither law code indicates that the division of land into strips was imposed by central government.

Any definite answer to the *attung* and *markland* problem is impossible; both may once have existed in parts of Svealand north of Mälar, particularly as some nobles, and the king, owned land in both. The *markland* is not named as such in any document before 1250, but it was undeniably the fixed land measurement in this region by 1300, and was used by the king's administration, perhaps becoming the dominant measure of land because of this, when the *ledung* taxes were introduced. *Upplandslagen* refers to the second *skeppvist* being taken from a *markland*:

> Two *skeppvister* shall be levied in *penningar* with forty marks for every ship. These *skeppvister* shall come from all three *folkland*, the same amount from one *markland* of land as from the fighting man in three ships . . .[47]

The *ledung* tax rules of *Upplandslagen* represent an arguably unsatisfactory compromise between two systems; the natural *skeppvist* was levied from the *hamna*, but the *penning skeppvist* was levied as a fixed number of ships per *hundare*, after *markland* and *mantal*.[48] These *skeppvister* may have been introduced at different times. The rules of *Häl-*

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[44] Dovring 1947 pp. 165–70.
[45] UL Wiþerbo balk 1.
[46] ÖgL B 1.
[47] UL Kg 10.
[48] Hjärne, Holmbäck and Wessén and Ambrosiani have all argued this. See Lönnroth 1940 pp. 128–30, Dovring 1947 pp. 70–74, Hafström 1949 pp. 154–59, Hjärne 1947b p. 10, SLL 1, *Upplandslagen*, Inledning p. 59, n. 38, Ambrosiani, pp. 74–75. The last three all argue that UL represents a later stage.

singelagen correspond closely to those of *Upplandslagen*. In *Västmannalagen* one ship was levied from each of the two *skeppslagar* in each *hundare*. Fines were calculated for *hamna* and *skeppslag*, and the natural *skeppvist* taken from the *hamna*, but there are no regulations on its division. Nor is there any mention of the *penning skeppvist* or *markland*. Although later, the text of *Södermannalagen* is often seen to represent an older stage in the development of the *ledung*, when it was still as important as a military levy, as it was as a method of taxation, and in this the *attung* appears, but no *markland*.[49]

A 1312 catalogue of *bönder* in the Vendel region who paid dues to *hevtigar* Erik and Valdemar lists them according to their wealth, as *mark-*, *six-öres-*, *halvmark-* and *two-öresbönder*, and shows that the number varied wildly from *hamna* to *hamna*; for instance, there were no less than forty-five *markbönder* in Spittaby *hamna*, but only *six-öresmän* in Kettlinge. Other *hamnor* were less variable, but still different. In 1540 these *hamnor* had become *åttingar*, and their taxable wealth was measured in *markland*, *öresland* and *penningland*. Sandström argued that the *markland* became the norm for taxation only in 1539, after Gustav Vasa's tax reforms, citing Snävringe and Åkerbo *härader* in Västmanland, whose *hamnor* were still listed in number of *bönder* in the 1530s with reference to the levying of *ättargäldspenningar* and *skeppvist*. However, Lönnroth pointed out that these *härader* (formerly *hundare*) were not necessarily typical. The *markland*, in all probability, was introduced for taxation purposes at some stage after 1250 and existed alongside the older measurement in number of men, but represented the beginning of a change to taxation of land in the region north of Mälar. The statement in *Upplandslagen* that the same amount of tax was taken from one *markland* as from one *vigerman* (weapon-bearing man) represents an attempt to link the two systems.[50]

Despite its use for taxation, it need not necessarily be the case that the *markland* was introduced for this reason. Another possible reason for its general introduction into Uppland was the ending of slavery and the creation of new tenant land. The last phase of slavery, in which it was almost extinguished, can be followed in documents

[49] SdmL Kg 10.

[50] . . . *slikt aff marklan iorpær sum afh wighum manni*. It does not necessarily mean that one *markland* was originally designed to represent the goods of one *vigerman*: Lönnroth 1940 p. 101.

of the thirteenth century.[51] Slavery is attested in *landskapslagar* and wills with manumission clauses for Östergötland, Västergötland, Södermanland, Uppland, Västmanland, Närke and Tiohärad.[52] A halfway stage is represented by the *fostre* of *Östgötalagen*, who was not yet contracted to farm land as a tenant, but owned his own household and had legal rights to some of his property.[53] The same situation may have existed in Västmanland, but in *Västgötalagen fostrar* appear to be senior household slaves, very likely another reflection of the relative unimportance of agricultural land in that region. Freeing of slaves reached its peak around 1280 and thereafter declined, presumably because there were few slaves left. It must be emphasised that Scandinavia was never a slave society, in which the economy, in this case based on agriculture, depended on unfree labour. There was no sudden 'reform' in which the institution of slavery was abolished or unfreedom disappeared, and there is no evidence that the landowners who transferred slaves to tenant farms fundamentally changed their attitudes to them, but economic convenience nevertheless coincided with Church opposition to slavery.

In *Upplandslagen* slavery was no longer hereditary, a reflection of changing circumstances. Slaves had been tied either to the wealthier households or to the demesne around them, but there was an incentive to free them to work the land as more meadow and forest land was cultivated.[54] The trend away from demesne-type estates and towards tenant farming is evident in Sko, and was given an impetus by the freeing of Church and nobility (and those who were tenants on their land) from taxation in 1279. In a sense the nobility were emulating the example of royal government, by taking regular payment from peasants instead of commanding their free services

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[51] For instance, DS(2) 951 (1287), in which Cecilia Elofsdotter freed slaves as part of her testament.

[52] Karras 1988 pp. 91–92. The wills are those of the nobility, and tell us nothing of slaves in smaller households.

[53] ÖgL Uaþa mal 16, Dr 13:2, Karras 1988 pp. 93–95. By comparison with those of Denmark and Norway, information on freeing of slaves is lacking in the Swedish law codes. This may be a reflection of their later date, when slavery was already in terminal decline. The implication of VgL that a slave can only become free by adoption into his kin suggests either that this law was earlier than the other codes, or that Västergötland was behind the other provinces at the end of the thirteenth century. An ÖgL reference to the same method of obtaining freedom does not suggest that there were no other methods of obtaining freedom in that *landskap*.

[54] Karras 1988 pp. 151–52.

as slaves. New settlements in Uppland were marked by the name *torp*, and differed from the mother *gårdar* in *jordetal* (taxable value of land) and *avrad*.[55] In addition to this there is evidence that smaller *gårdar* were split up between proprietors and tenants, probably when one peasant had more land than he needed, or a division of ownership occurred.[56] Many former slaves thus became *landbor* on increasingly large estates belonging to the Church or wealthy nobility. All these changes would have entailed an increasing number of agreements concerning ownership of land. Rahmqvist has demonstrated not only that the *markland* and its subdivisions were used to measure *avrad*, but that the size of many large noble estates can be shown to have corresponded to their fixed-size *avrad*. Earlier division of Gamla Uppsala *by* among different members of the cathedral chapter that owned it suggested that the measurement of 60 *öresland*, which it is known to have comprised in the fourteenth century, also existed shortly after 1250.[57] As Rahmqvist observed, the regulations of *Upplandslagen* assume that assessment of *byar* in *markland* was well established by 1296.[58]

In the late thirteenth century the *markland* and its subdivisions became the normal measure in records of loans, exchanges and sales of inherited land outside the family in the Mälar region. The rules for sale of such land, for which one mark in pure silver should be paid for each *örtug*, are given in *Upplandslagen's Jordabalk*. This principle was followed in an exchange between Karl of Fanö and Skokloster in 1274:

> Carl of Fanö exchanges land with Sko monastery, giving 48 örtugland and receiving 63, towards which the monastery, so that no-one shall be harmed by the exchange, puts an additional 18, of which each örtugland is paid for with one mark silver.[59]

The price of an *örtug* nevertheless fell after 1274, the mark silver of the law code representing an ideal price, possibly that fixed by agreement when the *markland* became the standard measure of exchange, but also an example of how the laws did not always conform to

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[55] Rahmqvist 1996 pp. 36–37.
[56] Lindkvist 1979 pp. 125–27.
[57] Rahmqvist 1996 p. 39.
[58] UL Byalagsbalken 1, 8, 10.
[59] DS 572.

everyday practice.[60] Several documents show that it was not only north of Mälar where *avrad* was measured in *markland* in the late thirteenth century.[61] *Markland* therefore displaced the *attung* as a land measurement relatively quickly, at least in eastern Sweden. The change may be related to the simultaneous monetisation of the economy, and may also have had consequences for the size and value of landholdings.

In *Upplandslagen* the most important taxation units below the *hundare* were *åtting* (eighth) and *hamna*. Attempts to determine their relationship to each other have been fruitless: the two did not exist together in one region, and there is no justification for trying to combine them within one system. Nor can *hamnor* or *åttingar* be linked into the same administrative system as the *socknar*, which were ecclesiastical administrative units. In written records the *hamna* is confined to three districts of Uppland, Trögd *hundare* and Våla and Tegelsmora *socknar*. Although the number of *åttingar* is not always eight per *hundare* in extant sources, it is always close, and *Upplandslagen* assumes that it was an eighth of a *hundare*. That it is an old division is evident, as *åttingar* are named after the largest village within them. Many *husaby* names must have come after the creation of the *åttingar*, since several villages whose names were given to their *åtting*, such as Husby-Talinge, had *husaby* added as a prefix.[62] The *åtting* may have been introduced alongside the *hundare*, but it is impossible to say when, except that it was before the colonisation of forest areas that occurred during the period covered by this study. Like the *hundare*, the *åtting* had a judicial function, two men from each (sixteen in total) working with the two *domare* and the *länsman*. Collective functions such as upkeep of bridges probably also existed in the Viking Period.

In *Upplandslagen* the *åttingsman*, chosen for one year from among the *bönder*, was responsible for tax collection. *Hamna* and *hamnaman* had many of the same functions as *åtting* and *åttingsman*. Both *åtting* and *hamna* were tied to the raising of the *ledung* taxes, but this was

[60] As in the case of land divisions, the extant texts of the *landskapslagar* may often represent ideals, some of which had little relationship to the realities of the time when they were written down.

[61] For instance, DS 592 (1275) from Östergötland and DS 622 (1277) from Södermanland.

[62] Later, after 1280, this village was named simply Husby: Rahmqvist 1996 pp. 52–53.

almost certainly a secondary function introduced with these taxes after 1250. Whereas the *åtting* may have been an eighth of a *hundare*, all attempts to prove that there was a specific number of *hamnor* per *hundare* have proved fruitless.[63] As noted, in the sixteenth century *hamnor* also varied widely in size. The *hamna* clearly had an earlier function in the raising of the *ledung* fleet, for which purpose it was presumably introduced, whereas the *hundare* was probably in origin a judicial district.[64] The districts in which the *hamna* existed may therefore have been those that assisted in the raising of the king's *ledung*, as opposed to private fleets—this matter is considered in more detail below.

7.3. *The military* ledung *and its substitute taxes*

As it appears in medieval Scandinavian law codes, the *ledung* is primarily a source of finance for the crown. However, many scholars assumed that it had been turned into a financial obligation, but was earlier purely a military levy. How much earlier this levy existed is disputed. The *ledung* is most important in the *konungabalker* and *flockar* of the law-codes of Svealand.[65] It appears in all of them, but the type and level of taxes varied even within one *landskap*. Rules that applied specifically to this, the levying of fines for failure to turn out a ship with proper equipment or full complement of men, are referred to as *roþær rætter* (lit. 'rowing laws') in *Upplandslagen*, *Södermannalagen* and the introduction to *Västmannalagen*. There is no evidence that the term *ledung* referred only to a fleet commanded by the king or his representative, but this is how it appears in the law codes. Flock 10 of the *Upplandslagen konungabalk* begins as follows:

> Now the king calls out *lið* and *ledung*, he calls out *roþ* and *reþ*; then harbour and ship and ship captain and all the oarsmen shall be appointed. And the *ledung* will be called out at Candlemass and appear at the *ledung* collection points.[66]

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[63] This was first recognised clearly by B. Lundberg (1972 p. 35).

[64] See Lindkvist 1988 p. 21, and B. Lundberg 1972 p. 76.

[65] UL KgB 10, SdmL KgB 10–12 (also 2 and 9), VmL KgB 7, HL KgB 7–9, DL RB 7.

[66] UL KgB 10: *Nu biuþær konungär liþ ok leþung utt, biuþær utt roþ ok reþ, þa skal nämpnä hampn ok stampn ok styriman ok hasätä allä.* The corresponding part of SdmL (KgB 10) reads: *Nu biuþer konunger lyð oc leþung ut: þa scal matu til skys bæræ. Roþ* and

If the king himself or his appointed representative did not sail with the *ledung*, all three *folkland* paid the *skeppvisten*. The first two *skeppvister* listed were paid in farming products (*spannmal*), the second in money, four marks for each ship, the first three reckoned on the basis of land ownership and the fourth after the number of men living on the land. In *Hälsingelagen* and *Västmannalagen* these payments correspond to the *ledungslama*.[67] Although a payment in lieu of military service in origin, this appears as a regulated sum in the law codes, being a payment of one mark for every *ar* in Rodén.[68] In *Guta saga* forty marks in coin (*laiþingslami*) were paid for every ship that did not sail, in the year following the summons.[69] The *ledung* laws of *Södermannalagen* correspond to those in *Upplandslagen*; the king or his delegate took part in the *ledung* expedition, or substitute payments were made.[70] As in Uppland, in the other law codes fourteen days' grace was allowed for arming and preparation for an expedition, or for payment of the taxes.[71] In *Guta saga* a similar provision (half a month) is listed. The summons was made at a *ting* meeting.[72]

In *Upplandslagen ledung* organisation was tied to the *hundare*, which equipped four ships (*skepp*). The *hundare* was divided into *hälfter*, *fjärdingar*, and *åttingar* or *hamnor*.[73] Rodén and Hälsingland differed, being divided into *skeppslag*, each of which equipped one ship. The *skeppslag* was divided into *ar* (*år, har*). Västmanland was divided into eight *hundare*, each split into two *skeppslag*, in turn divided into *hälfter*, *fjärdingar* and *hamnor*. Each *skeppslag* provided a ship.[74] In Stor-Hälsingland, Medelpad and Ångermanland the administrative divisions were *skeppslag* and *har*.[75] *Västmannalagen* also mentions the right to take *pant* (lit. pledge) for the building of ships (*snäkkor*).[76] If the

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reþ are not easy to translate; *roþ* may refer to the district to which the local *lið* belonged, as in Rodén's *rodslagen*, *reþ* to the *ledung* or its district, as in Norwegian *skipsreiða*, and SkL, *Stuth och ledung scal hwer bonde rethae*.

[67] The second part of the word derives from the verb *lämia* (ON *lemja*), to hinder or prevent; SLL 1, *Upplandslagen* p. 61, note 52, Hafström 1949 p. 62.

[68] UL KgB 11. See also HL KgB 7.

[69] Guta saga 4, p. 14.

[70] SdmL 11.

[71] SdmL KgB 10, VmL KgB 7.

[72] Guta saga 4, p. 14.

[73] UL KgB 10:1.

[74] VmL KgB 7:1.

[75] VmL KgB 7 and 8.

[76] VmL MB 25:12.

obligations were not fulfilled fines were levied, the *snækkiopenningar*, ten marks in silver for every ship lacking. This may have been identical to the *ättergälden*. The provisions of *Södermannalagen* resemble those of *Upplandslagen*: it was divided into twelve *hundare*, *skeppslag* and *hamnor*. In Hälsingland taxes were paid in skins and cloth, with a fine of three marks for neglecting duty, rising to four if a whole ship or equivalent *ledungslama* was missing.[77]

The reason why Rodén's laws differed from those of the three *folkland* of Uppland can only be speculated upon, but it is very likely that its special status is related to its situation as a coastal district, or, as Tunberg put it, a frontier or marcher land, the area from which attacks were launched but also which a seaborne enemy might invade.[78] Tunberg assumes that the region was like the *allmänningar*, but it is equally likely that it was placed at the disposal of the elected king of the *svear*. This probably occurred even before the three *folkland* were combined into Uppland.[79]

Every ship of the fleet was under the supervision of a *styrman* (helmsman). No doubt the avoidance of rowing was a major privilege, but the *styrman* was more than a navigator. He had judicial rights while in command of the ship, and in *Västmannalagen* and *Södermannalagen* was responsible for raising the *skeppvist* or fines, the difference between fines and taxes having been eroded.[80] These tasks were carried out by the *länsman* in *Upplandslagen*, but whether this means that *länsman* and *styrman* were one and the same or that the *länsman* had usurped some of the duties of the *styrmän* is not clear.[81] In Västmanland and Södermanland the two were clearly separate, both a *länsman* and two *styrmän* having responsibilities, but those of levying the *ledung* taxes belonging to the latter. The *styrman* position was inherited in the Danish *Jyllandslagen*, and this may have been

[77] HL KgB 7.

[78] Tunberg 1947a p. 12.

[79] As noted earlier, Uppland may have been no more than a geographical designation before *Upplandslagen*.

[80] VmL KgB 7:3 and 7:4, SdmL KgB 10:3. Holmbäck and Wessén call the *styrman* a *skeppshövding*, but this definition does not include all his functions either.

[81] Hafström 1949 suggested that *länsman* and *styrman* were the same in *Upplandslagen* because the *hundare* was the basic unit for raising of *ledung* taxes at the time of the law code's inception and was also the basic administration unit, but it is difficult to see how this situation is substantially different from that in neighbouring *landskap*.

the situation in Sweden.[82] Each man had to provide his own weapons,[83] but the *lagmän* and *styrmän* were responsible for equipping the ships. In order to do this they demanded provisions from the men.[84] Punishments on board were more severe than those on land, fines being double in Uppland and Södermanland.[85]

In the Svealand laws the rules for *ledung* callout are closely followed by regulations for keeping watch (*warphald*) over towns and coast and from hills or mountains: *byvakt, strandvakt* and *bötesvakt*.[86] This was the responsibility of all *bönder* and settled men, and there were fines for failure to carry it out. These regulations correspond to the *roþær rætter* of the *ledung*, and both may be treated as complementary for achieving the same object, the defence of the coastline. In *Västmannalagen* regulations for both are included in the same *flock*, and in all the Svealand law codes the watch laws were supervised by the *skeppshövding*. There are a number of other indications that the primary function of the *ledung* of the *landskapslagar* was defensive. It is stipulated in *Hälsingelagen* that no *ledungslama* is paid if the *ledung* goes out over the sea (to other lands?) or beyond Aspasund. This indicates that the men of Hälsingland both paid and served if the fleet was in Swedish coastal waters, but not if it went further afield. Unfortunately the location of Aspasund is uncertain. Holmbäck and Wessén believed it was probably somewhere in the Stockholm archipeligo, Adolf Schück that it was Aspösund in Blekinge, near to the Swedish-Danish frontier.[87] If Schück is correct the regulation must have originated after Svealand and Götaland were united under one king. A similar provision is made for the men of Rodén, who paid one mark for every *ar* if they stayed at home, but did not pay *ledungslama* if the *ledung* went 'over the sea'.[88] In *Södermannalagen* it is stated that the men cannot go over the border of the land (*landskap*?) without permission. These regulations are reminiscent of the

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[82] JL 3:20.
[83] See HL RB 14:2.
[84] SkL Add 14.
[85] See UL KgB 11 and MhB 11. Although *Östgötalagen* has no *ledung* rules, a similar double fine for killing a man on board ship exists, 80mk as opposed to the normal 40 for killing a king's man, and higher fines if killed on watch and if drowned (presumably by another) in the sea. See ÖgL EB 33 and 34, and MB 35 for comparison.
[86] UL KgB 12, HL KgB 9, SdmL KgB 12, VL KgB 7.
[87] A. Schück 1950 p. 472.
[88] UL KgB 11.

Norwegian *Gulatingsloven*, which explicitly states that the *leidang* cannot go outside Norwegian coastal waters.[89]

Östgötalagen has no *flock* covering taxation, and no *konungabalk* such as those in the Svealand law codes. However, it is known that a *ledung* tax was levied in the eastern part of the region. Those on the coast might pay taxes to both king and jarl.[90] As in Svealand, the *ledung* tax was levied on a collective basis, from administrative districts, and seems to have varied according to location of the *härad*. There were also *gårdar* or groups of *gårdar* called *hå* and *hamna*, presumably used for collection.[91] One class of men had the right to collect fines and taxes. These were men of sufficient standing to own their own ships, which could be summoned as part of the *ledung* by the king.[92] It is no surprise that there are no similar rules in *Västgötalagen*, since the province was practically landlocked, but it has been argued that the *ledung* levy extended to the coast of Finland.[93] The sole basis of this is place-name evidence in coastal regions that are known to have been settled by Swedish immigrants, Varsinais-Suomi and Uusimaa. The names are impossible to date accurately, and some may have been copied from homeland names. Nor does the place-name component *-böte-* imply that a full *ledung* system was operational there. On the other hand, it would be surprising if there was not an organised watch.

As Schück contended, the *ledung* regulations of the *landskapslagar* concern defence of the homeland. They refer to a regular annual routine. Overseas military expeditions were rarer. Schück suggested that this 'war *ledung*' was regulated separately, although assembled under the same system. This is implied in the statement of *Upplandslagen* that those who sail overseas have *frid*, whereas those who stay at home pay taxes. It would not be surprising if such regulations were outside the remit of regional law-codes. The overseas expeditions are probably those 'when the king himself ruled how long he would be

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[89] GL 295. The provisions of the Norwegian and Danish law codes make a useful comparison to the Swedish ones. In Norway *skibreder* were divided into *mangerder*, or *liður* in Viken, the equivalent of *attinger* or *hamnor*. In Denmark the *skipæn*, sometimes the equivalent of one *härad*, sometimes two to four within a *härad*, was divided into *hamnor*.

[90] ÖgL BB 28, Lönnroth 1940 p. 64.

[91] ÖgL GB 16 and BB 28:5.

[92] ÖgL DrB 14:3, VB 12:3.

[93] See Chapter 12.6.

out for'.[94] The expedition of Tyrgils Knutsson to Ladoga in 1300, related in *Erikskrönikan*, will have been one such:

> Om þingisdagha ther epter wara
> tha wille marskalk törgils fara
> off konungens vegna hafde han räth
> Then vänaste skiphär man hafuer seet.[95]

When examining organisation of fleets it was perhaps natural for many scholars to look back to the 'golden age' of Scandinavian seafaring, the Viking Period. There are many occurrences of the term *leiðangr* in skaldic verse, although none can be shown to correspond to the usage of any of the Scandinavian law-codes. Instead it seems to mean 'fleet'. A sounder basis for an early origin to the law-code levy could apparently be found in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, both of which say that the Norwegian *leidang* was introduced by Håkon the Good (935–61), and *Guta saga*, which tells us that the king and jarl of the *svear* could levy their taxes in Gotland before Christianisation, and (later?) call on seven warships for their military expeditions.[96] Some scholars went back to the Vendel Period, or further still, to the sixth-century Chlochilaich raid of Gregory of Tours and *Beowulf*.[97] A variety of linguistic and archaeological evidence has been used to support the theory of an early origin. Hafström argued that the *ledung* of the *landskapslagar* originated in the Vendel Period (550–800), when ships were propelled by oars alone, because oars or words derived from *ar/har* are mentioned, but not sails. However, references to

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[94] UL KgB 10.

[95] Ek pp. 76–77: After the ting day/then would Marshall Tyrgils set out/with the king's support he had equipped/The finest fleet that had been seen

The *ledung* summons was usually at Candlemass *ting* (2 February), but in SdmL it was called up at the *folkland landsting* on the first Sunday of the feast at Strängnäs: SdmL 11, Pr. Overseas expeditions were probably summoned in the same way. The chronicle implies that Tyrgils's expedition was in 1297, but it actually took place in 1300.

[96] Guta saga 2 and 4, pp. 6 and 12. Chapter 4 states that the Gotlanders agreed to send their ships against heathen countries, but not Christian ones:

> *Siþan gutar toku sir biskup ok presti ok viþr at fylgia suia kunungi i herferþ miþ siau snekkium ufan a haiþin land, ok ai ufan kristin.*
>
> *Whether this levy had existed before the Gotlanders themselves were christianised is not clear.*

[97] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae Franconum* 3:3, *Beowulf* 23, vv. 2354–66 (in which the name appears as Hygelac). Hafström (1949 p. 12) translates *sæcyniga* as *ledungskonunger* in order to back up his point.

rowing and oars were used in the laws because rowers and oars corresponded to the number of men, which need not imply that the ships in question had no sails. Tunberg suggested that the number of terms involving *rod-* take us back to an early era when ships were steered with the *rodd* (steering oar).[98] But he pointed out himself that church boats were still steered with steering oar in the nineteenth century, and the change to steering by rudder did not in any case occur until the mid-thirteenth century, not long before the appearance of *Upplandslagen*.[99]

More recently, Ole Crumlin-Pederson has argued that Skuldelev 5 (c. 1050) would ideally suit the *leidang* ships described in the Norwegian *Gulatings lov*.[100] Like the later Swedish laws, this provided for fines as a result of failure to maintain and equip warships, but also specified the amount of wear before a ship had to be replaced.[101] Crumlin-Pedersen argues that the much-repaired Skuldelev 5 fits this category, but this does not mean that when Skuldelev 5 sailed the seas expeditions were regulated in the way that they were in Denmark one hundred and fifty years later. Nor does it necessarily follow that the ship belonged to the king's *leding* fleet: while it is true that it is of a substantial size (26 oars), although unlikely to have been the flagship of any self-respecting noble, it could easily have belonged to the private fleet of a powerful noble. Ships of similar size and clinker construction were used for a very long period in the Baltic region, even up to the fifteenth century, as witnessed by the two ships unearthed at Helgeandsholmen (Stockholm), a twenty-oar ship dated to the early fourteenth-century and the late fifteenth-century 'Riddarholmskepp', which carried two small cannon.[102] Continuity in

[98] Hafström 1949 p. 74, Tunberg 1947a p. 6.

[99] A Scandinavian warship is depicted with a steering oar on a seal of Lübeck dating to 1230: see Dahlbäck, ed. 1983 p. 174. By contrast, a near-identical ship with a rudder is depicted in a mid thirteenth-century wall-painting in Skamstrup church, Kalundborg, Sjælland.

[100] Crumlin-Pedersen 1988. In many of Crumlin-Pedersen's works there is an assumption of continuity between a Viking Age *ledung* and that of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See the critical comments in Lund 1997 p. 197, note 6, and also Crumlin-Pedersen 1997 pp. 191–92.

[101] The ship was not accepted if it shipped more water than one man could bail out: GL 295.

[102] Dählbäck [ed] 1983 pp. 158–60, Dählbäck 1987 pp. 46–47, and Varenius 1990 pp. 38–45. Like the ship in the Skamstrup church painting, Boat V of Helgeandesholmen has a rudder.

ship technology does not necessarily imply continuity in military organisation.

Other scholars have attempted to identify a regular *ledung* warship. A longship is described in the *Manhelgdsbalken* of *Upplandslagen*.[103] From this and other texts derived the theory of the standard ship, either 36-oared or 40-oared, but there is no reason to assume that all warships were built on a regular pattern in the thirteenth century.[104] There is in fact a variety of evidence to the contrary. For all its dubious aspects (such as possible exaggeration of the enemy's numbers and suspect pre-battle speeches by the leaders) there is no need to doubt the author of *Sverris saga* when he describes ships of different sizes.[105] The Halland list of *Kong Valdemar's jordebog* refers specifically to all sizes of *skipæn*, varying from sixteen oars to forty-two. Schück noted the references to *snäckor* and *skyttar* in *Erikskrönikan* and *Södermannalagen*, and argued that these might have corresponded to the *snækkior* and *sköttabaather* of Karl Knutsson's reign (the fifteenth century). Even this, he suggested, would have been only a general distinction, both categories including several sizes of ship.[106] Even in more recent times the Swedish *skärgårdsflotta* consisted of a wide variety of ships, partly because it was useful to have vessels with different draughts and capabilities for operation in coastal and inland waterways.[107] The same applied in the Middle Ages; in October 1309, when the *hertigar* Erik and Valdemar feared a Danish seaborne invasion, they ordered the sinking of vessels manned by more than twenty

[103] UL MhB 11:3. The *landskapslagar* contain a number of names for ships (such as *skepp*, *sæssa*, *snäkka*, *hærskip*): again, these need not refer to specific types or sizes of ship, as Hafström suggests. Some may have been regional names, such as *hærskip*, which appears in *Västgötalagen* (*Urbotabalken* 1:10). Nevertheless, Hafström's discussion of the bewildering variety of terminology for ships and related matters is useful: see Hafström 1949 pp. 23–26. See also Tunberg 1947a p. 20. Rikke Malmros even suggested (on the basis of skaldic verse) that Viking Age warships may have been of a standard size: see Malmros 1985 pp. 107–10. Malmros overlooks the evidence of archaeology.

[104] Hafström 1949 pp. 23–26, 76. Hafström suggests both a 36-oared and a 40–oared ship as the norm at different points in his work. See also Schluyter 1877 p. 626.

[105] Sverris saga 87, 88, pp. 93–96.

[106] A. Schück 1950 p. 487. See Ek p. 130, where *snekkior och löpande scutar* appear, and SdmL Appendix, which refers to the readying of *snækkior och skutur* for the *ting* day. Schück pointed out the comparison between the term *löpeskuta* and the *hleypiskuta* of GL.

[107] Translates literally as 'archipelago fleet'. See Berg 2000.

to block the approaches to Stockholm, but retained those capable of operating in the inland waterways.[108] Large medieval European armies were certainly not equipped on a standard pattern, and we should not expect *ledung* fleets to be standardised either.

Mats Larsson attempted to estimate the age of the *ledung* organisation (in Sweden) by determining when the *hamnor* first appeared. His contention that *hamnor* were clearly associated with the *ledung* is almost certainly correct, the corresponding *åttingar* of other districts probably belonging to regions where nobles, possibly with their own private fleets, held sway.[109] The difficulty is that the full distribution of *hamnor* is first known from 1540, but Larsson used only results from those *hamnor* with Iron-Age cemeteries in regions where there was no medieval settlement expansion.[110] He then correlated the larger of these (in order to lessen the danger of distortions due to fluctuations in age grouping and proportions of different social groups) with Ambrosiani's work on cemetery distribution and period of use.[111] By this means he estimated the period of origin as between the late tenth and the end of the eleventh century. Even if correct, the *hamnor* of the *ledung* (as known from the later law codes) need not have been created when the *byar* were. Their names give little clue, as place-name scholars give very wide periods of use for different suffixes.[112] The place-name 'Kungshamna', found on the Swedish coast from Blekinge to Mälaren, in the Åland Islands and along the north coast of the Gulf of Finland, not to mention along the whole coastline of Norway from Viken to Trøndelag, is very possibly a clue that the place was once a calling or departure point for ships of an organised coastal watch.[113] The name *hamna* may be older than the

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[108] DS 1636.

[109] This is especially clear in SdmL KgB 10.

[110] Unqualified use of sources from different periods, in Hafström's case especially the twelfth- and thirteenth-century *landskapslagar* and the *fogderäkenskaper* of Gustav Vasa's period, two centuries later, was one of Schück's main criticisms of Hafström in his review: see A. Schück 1950 p. 465.

[111] Larsson 1987 pp. 6–31. Even allowing for Larsson's attempts to remove distortions, the results still depend on a number of estimates, for instance, of number of graves per settlement unit per century, which Larsson assessed as 14.3, using Ambrosiani's 1973 statistics and the model life table of Hassan. See p. 31.

[112] For instance, Ståhle, referred to by Larsson, said that *-inge* names belong mainly to the Roman Iron Age and Migration Periods, and *-sta* and *-by* to names to the whole Iron Age, with *-sta* names diminishing in the Viking Period, while *-by* names increased in use into the Medieval Period. See Ståhle 1946.

[113] In all there are twelve *kungshamna*-names along the Swedish and Finnish coasts.

king's *ledung*, but if it was a name associated closely with it, this suggests that the *hamna* administrative districts were named after the settlement units (or *byar*) came into being. Larsson's research gives an approximate *terminus post quem* for the *hamnor* and the *ledung*, rather than the time at which they were created.

Ledung fleets have traditionally been regarded as those used for overseas expeditions, especially those which Valdemar I of Denmark launched against the Wends in the period 1140–1190.[114] To these could be added twelfth and thirteenth-century Danish expeditions to Finland, Norway and Estonia and Norwegian expeditions to Denmark, the Baltic and the Western Isles (Scotland). There is an almost complete lack of Swedish sources prior to the late thirteenth century, but from the *Chronicle of Novgorod* and records in later works we know that there were a number of Swedish expeditions in the Baltic region during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The historicity of the 'first crusade' of St Erik is extremely doubtful, but there were certainly Swedish raids on Finland, since Pope Alexander III refers to the unfortunate tendency of the Finns to revert to their pagan ways after promising to convert whenever the Swedes paid them a visit.[115] According to the *Chronicle of Novgorod*, a bishop and a Swedish *kniaz* ('king' or 'prince') raided lands subject to Novgorod with sixty ships in 1142.[116] Another attack on Ladoga by the *svei* is recorded for 1164, and a raid by a fleet of *varjager* (a general term for northmen, Vikings or Varangians) took place in 1201. This was followed by some sort of peace agreement.[117] Heinrich of Livonia mentions an expedition of Germans and *gutar* (*gothis*) with an unnamed Swedish *dux* (*duce Suecie*) and a German bishop to Kurland in 1197, which the wind carried to Estonia instead. The bishop and the Germans, he claimed, were happy with the promise of the locals to convert to Christianity, but the Swedes were not, and extracted a tribute.[118]

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[114] Tunberg seems to have been confused by this himself: he refers to the *ledung* as an offensive instrument on p. 9, but calls it a *skärgårds flotta* ('fleet of the archipeligo'): Tunberg 1947a p. 20.

[115] DS 100.

[116] Chron. Nov. p. 41. All subsequent references to this chronicle refer to this edition. It is a translation of the *First (Older) Novgorod Chronicle*, whose extant text actually dates to the fourteenth century. There are three other Novgorod Chronicles, which differ in certain respects.

[117] Chron. Nov. pp. 42–43.

[118] HCL 1:13, p. 28.

However, like Norwegian raids in the Baltic these expeditions appear to have been little more than old-style Viking raids. The *Sverris saga* account of the 1186 expedition of Erik, brother of King Sverre, who 'went to the Baltic to plunder (*herja*) heathen lands' gives an honest appraisal of their purpose.[119] Such raids from Sweden may well have been private enterprises: the *dux suecie* who went to Estonia in 1197 may have been Birger Brosa, 'jarl of the *svear* and *götar*', leading a large operation mounted with the backing of King Knut Eriksson, but like its predecessors the raid shows no other intent than to make a quick profit, much like the old Viking raids. Knut Eriksson had earlier received several letters from Popes urging action against pagans.[120] The disastrous expedition of Johan Sverkersson to Estonia in 1220, in which Jarl Karl Döve and Bishop Karl Magnusson died, signalled a change, when an attempt was made to establish a permanent base. Before this, no expedition sanctioned by the Swedish king can be definitely attested.

The view that the *ledung* was an ancient institution has recently been challenged by Niels Lund, who suggests that the Danish *leding* of *Jyllandslagen* and *Skånelagen's* Appendix began as the coastguard force mentioned by Saxo as having been instituted after the fall of Wendish Ancona in 1169.[121] The word *ledung* or its Latin equivalent *expeditio* appears several times in documents earlier than this, but Lund argues that this is a different *ledung* from that of the law codes.[122] Given that use of terminology by medieval authors was never exact, that the use of any term can change with time and that social organisation also changes, it would almost be surprising if the word did have the same meaning in 1024 as it did in 1241.[123] As noted earlier,

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[119] Sverris saga 113, p. 120.

[120] DS 59 (FMU 24), DS 55 (FMU 27).

[121] Saxo 14:39, pp. 510–11. Although the point was not argued explicitly before this, other scholars had noted Saxo's reference, and implied that one function of the *ledung*, if not its only one, was to guard the coasts.

[122] For instance, DD 1:2, 21 (1070) and DD 1:2, 123 (1140).

[123] Those who support the 'ancient origin' appear to assume that the onus is on those who do not to disprove the theory that the *ledung* was an ancient institution, going back at least as far as the Late Viking Period. See, for instance, Albrectsen 1998, a review of *Lið, leding og landeværn*, which concludes that Lund offers no real proof that the *leding* was a relatively recent phenomenon when the Danish laws were codified. It might also be suggested that the unlikely event of the survival of an institution virtually unchanged for three or four hundred years, during which period there was considerable social, economic and political change, needs solid evidence.

the view that the accession of Valdemar I marked the beginning of a substantial growth in royal administration is no longer sustainable. In the same way that Hermansson and others argue that the basis of royal government was still family alliances and personal management of powerful subjects, so Lund points out that the fleets of the Wendish campaigns were organised in the same way as those of the Viking Period, as the assembled ships of the powerful nobles of Denmark. If it does not prove that there was not a king's *ledung* before c. 1170, at the very least Saxo's text suggests that changes were introduced.

Seen in this light, the tax *ledung* of the Danish law codes was not a transformation of an ancient fleet organisation, but of a relatively recently introduced callout of ships for the purposes of patrolling the coastline. There are clear indications that the Norwegian and Swedish fleet *ledung* from which taxes were derived were also defensive in function. However, there is no way of telling exactly when such an organisation was introduced into Sweden. In line with other developments one might suspect that it was after the Danish one mentioned by Saxo. Although *Guta saga* implies that the ship levy was ancient, even pre-conversion, some regulations in the same source suggest otherwise: for instance, each of the island's six *sjättingar* equipped a ship, and the seventh was equipped by the town of Visby, which had not grown sufficiently until the late twelfth century.[124] Norwegian towns also provided a ship each to the *ledung*, although Danish ones were freed from this obligation. The claim for Håkon the Good's introduction of the *ledung* to Norway made by *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* looks suspiciously like a later attribution to a famous founder-king, but even if this was the case, it is likely to have changed in nature or function by the thirteenth century.

In connection with the institution of the Swedish *ledung* the appearance of the jarl of the realm is relevant, since there are indications that some of his responsibilities, although not necessarily the most important ones, were related to coastal defence (*ledung* and *vakt*), in that he had the right to certain tax revenues in coastal regions. *Guta saga* mentions that taxes were paid to both king and jarl, forty and twenty marks silver respectively.[125] Similarly, taxes were levied on six

[124] Guta saga 4, p. 13.
[125] Guta saga 2, p. 6.

skeppslagar in Rodén, and appeals were judged by 'konung ællr hærtugh'.[126] The *hertig* was the successor to the jarl after Birger Magnusson's death in 1266, after which the jarl's or *hertig's* rights in coastal districts slowly became defunct, rather than being abolished, a result of the change in the nature of the *jarladöme* referred to earlier and perhaps the decline in the importance of the military *ledung* itself. There were periods when no powerful *hertig* existed. King Birger Magnusson was thus able to take the taxes due to both king and jarl from Östergötland in 1316.[127] As effective regent from 1290 to 1303 Tyrgils Knutsson and his supporters must also have exercised control over the *hertigdöme*. Nevertheless, the regulations of *Upplandslagen*, codified during this period, still refer to these rights, as do later *landskapslagar*. However, the jarl's or *hertig's* precise responsibilities are not elaborated in the law codes, and there are no grounds for the assumption made by several historians in the past that the jarl was the sole leader of the *ledung* fleet, who had to command it at sea.[128] Both *Upplandslagen* and *Södermannalagen* state that 'all shall make room in the harbour for the king and likewise for bishop or jarl and for the *förman* whom the king has appointed in his place'.[129] This and other laws referring to the king and his representative indicate that neither king nor jarl needed to command the *ledung* fleet. In the case of the patrol fleet, such a requirement would have been extremely inconvenient to either of them.

The question remains as to when the tax *ledung* of the *landskapslagar* was instituted. For this we have one piece of written evidence, the 1247 entry in the 1208–88 annals of Sigtuna, which state that 'the community of farmers of Uppland loses its liberty at the battle of Sparsätra and the *spannskatt*, *skeppvist* and many other burdens are imposed upon them'.[130] Allowing for the tendency of medieval annalists to attribute changes that may have been gradual to one dramatic event, the entry may be substantially correct. No previous ruler of Sweden had been in such a strong position to enforce changes in Svealand as Birger Jarl was after his victories over its recalcitrant

[126] UL RB 13.
[127] Hjärne 1947b p. 82.
[128] For instance, Tunberg 1920 p. 155 ?? and 1947 pp. 29–30, and Hafström 1949 pp. 57–58.
[129] UL KgB 11:4 and SdmL KgB 11pr.
[130] ASMÆ, *Annales 1208–1288* p. 260.

nobility in 1247/48 and 1251, and the 1208–88 annals are almost contemporary. As noted above, a clue that taxation changes were introduced suddenly into Svealand in comparison with Götaland may be the much more detailed regulation in the Svealand law-codes, particularly *Upplandslagen*, which is the earliest. As observed by Thomas Lindkvist, there is a significant difference in nature between the taxes of Götaland and those of Svealand. Lindkvist assumes that the *ledung* was primarily an instrument for external plundering, which was transformed into an instrument for internal financial exploitation when the opportunity for plundering had diminished. It has been mentioned above that fleet *ledung* and tax *ledung* may not have been quite so incompatible, in that a *ledung* consisting of regular defensive naval patrols was very likely introduced either before or, in the case of Svealand, at the same time as the tax *ledung*. Nevertheless, his argument that the taxes of the Svealand *landskapslagar*, which derived largely from the *ledung* system, marked a significant and marked shift from a 'system' designed for external raising of finance, on other words plundering and trade, holds good.

Unlike Västergötland and Östergötland, Uppland, prior to 1247/48 the most heavily populated *landskap* in Svealand, was not dominated by a few landowning families. Hence, although its nobility might acknowledge a king of all Sweden, the fragmented power structure meant that no single family was sufficiently powerful either to maintain the kingship itself or to be utilised to administer a province on behalf of a king as the *Folkungaätten* of Östergötland were. The nobility resisted encroachment on their traditional ways, either by Church or king. Birger Jarl's predecessor, Ulf Fase, had been happy to maintain the status quo, and Erik Eriksson had been in no position to challenge him or the nobles who had already driven him out on one occasion.

The parts of *Östgötalagen* referred to above, in which nobles placed their own ships at the disposal of the king, should leave us in no doubt that nobility possessed their own fleets. Long after the thirteenth century Scandinavian nobles maintained their own retinues of soldiers, employed as garrisons and for local protection, and we can safely assume that they maintained their own ships as well. Although the attempt resulted in his defeat and death at Lena, as late as 1208 Ebbe Sunesen, a member of the powerful Hvide family of Sjælland, could lead an army of his own to Sweden in an

attempt to reinstall his son-in-law Sverker as king.[131] Sverre Sigurdson of Norway (1177–1202), who began as a rebel himself, battled throughout his reign against rival nobles who commanded ships, and in the 1220s the rebels (the *ribbungar* of Viken) similarly challenged Håkon Håkonson. Although in this period known battles for the kingship of Sweden were fought on land, the nobility of Uppland probably continued much as they had done before the Viking era, for which the twelfth-century raids mentioned in the *Chronicle of Novgorod* provide some evidence. The name *styrman* appears on rune-stones of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, at which time they were no doubt servants of local landowners or independent operators, helmsmen and masters of their ships, but not agents of the king.

7.4. Lið, ledung *and changes in warfare in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sweden*

The inclusion of *styrmän* in the *landskapslagar*, together with the requirements of all settled men to pay taxes or serve in the *ledung* fleet, might suggest that the *ledung* was all-inclusive, and the main method of raising military forces. Such an assumption, that any large force was raised through the *ledung* system, and that the *ledung* included the immediate retinues of the king and nobility, or even amounted to a general levy, has been made or implied in several historical works, including recent ones.[132] A number of Swedish scholars also assumed that the *lið* of the *landskapslagar* was one and the same as the *ledung*, both terms being included in one line ('lið/lið ok leðung') for alliterative effect.[133] Hjärne and Adolf Schück disagreed.[134] They argued that *lið* meant the retinues of the magnates, something quite separate from a callout of free *bönder*. Schück argued plausibly that

[131] The defeat is recorded in a number of annals: *916–1263* follows the Danish in mentioning the battle as a defeat for the Hvide family, *1208–88* mentions Sverker's involvement as well. Later Swedish annals take their information from these. See also Kræmmer, 1999 p. 174.

[132] See, for instance, Moseng et al. 1999 p. 200, in which it is assumed that the forces Håkon Håkonson employed in landlocked Värmland in 1227 were part of the Norwegian *leidang*, including horsemen.

[133] For instance, Hafström 1949 p. 14. Hjärne 1947a, and A. Schück 1950 in his review of Hafström's work, both disagreed.

[134] Hjärne 1947a p. 23, and A. Schück 1950 p. 469.

the *reþ* of the *konungabalkar* meant *ledung*, as in the Norwegian term *skipreiða*. If this is the case, the term *roþ* should correspond in some way to *lið*, and both he and Hjärne suggested that it was the region which equipped a king's or noble's warship, in the era of the *landskapslagar*, the *skeppslag*.

The view that *lið* and *ledung* were different is strengthened by the appearance of a similar word combination in other less poetic sources; for instance, 'liðsmenn ok leiðangrsmenn' in the Norwegian *Sverris saga*.[135] In this case *lið* probably equates with Sverre's *hirð*, those followers that were bound to him, since, as in the *landskapslagar*, it is contrasted with *leiðangrsmenn*. Elsewhere, however, the term *lið* is used in a more general sense to mean a following, a force of armed men, similar to the old term *hær*, or 'fleet', for instance, in referring to Sverre's fleet in 1188 as a 'lið', and Håkon IV's in 1257 as a 'torsottlikt lid'.[136] The whole fleet, in this sense, is the following of the king. Sturla Þórðarson also uses *leiðangr* in a similar way at least twice, referring to the fleet sent to meet the Swedes in 1248, and to a later fleet sent against Denmark, but these expeditions represent the 'war *ledung*', the levy for service overseas.[137]

The *ledung* of the law-codes was not a general mass callout, and the term is never used for this in contemporary sources, even by poets.[138] In the Svealand laws such a levy was usually referred to as the *folkuppbäd* or *landeværn*. This seems to have been a mass levy similar to the German *hereban* and Norwegian *allmannautbud* or *mann av hus-utbud*, which would most likely have been made in defence of the homeland.[139] *Gulatings lov* mentions that all men, 'thegn and thrall',

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[135] Sverris saga 136, p. 141. It should be noted that mention of *leiðangrsmenn* here does not necessarily imply that the men serving with Sverre had been raised by him through the *ledung* system, but that they were men subject to *ledung* service, in contrast to Sverre's own following.

[136] Sverris saga 114, p. 120, and Hákonar saga 293, p. 177. See Jesch 2001 pp. 187–95, for a discussion of the use of *lið* in the Viking Age.

[137] In the poem *Hákonarkviða*, 39, and Hákonar saga 273, p. 181, describing the fleet sent against the Danes.

[138] Referring to a skaldic poem in Snorri's *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar*, Malmros argued that *leiðangr* and *almenningr*, which she takes to refer to a general levy, could mean the same, at least in the eleventh century. Whether the description actually refers to Harald Hardrada's day or Snorri's is debatable, but in any case it is not certain that this is what *almenningr* means here, nor does the poem equate them. Furthermore, *almenningr* usually refers to common property, as does Swedish *allmenning*. See Malmros 1985 p. 113.

[139] SdmL 11: 1.

must go to the ships if the homeland is attacked.[140] Fighting at sea was customary in Norway, but such a levy would be more likely to assemble on solid ground in Sweden or Denmark. On the other hand, it is not impossible that the *ledung* system was used (or abused) by some rulers to raise some forces for service on land, even if this is apparently outside the remit of the law codes. Erik and Valdemar called on one *ryttare* (horseman?) from each *hundare* to be ready for the expected Danish attack of 1309, but there is no suggestion that was in lieu of *ledung* service.

Both Hafström and Tunberg guessed that a change in ship types was one of the main reasons for the decline of the military *ledung* and its change to a tax. While it is true that the thirteenth century saw the arrival of the cog, there is no evidence that this superseded traditional warships, or that the cogs referred to in medieval sources were much bigger or deeper in draught than longships or knarrs.[141] As late as 1429 a Norwegian levy fleet put to sea off Bergen to counter a *vitalienbrüder* fleet, admittedly failing miserably in its task. In the thirteenth century the activities of Slavic and Estonian pirates diminished, the last large fleet being that which set out from rebellious Saaremaa (Ösel) in 1226, but the value of a fleet in the Baltic was not necessarily diminished by their disappearance. The activities of *vitalienbrüder* became a threat in the fourteenth century, if mostly to sea traffic, but little is heard of Swedish fleets in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, the Swedes could still transport large forces overseas in 1300: the tax *ledung* did not in itself put an end to the levy, since both could operate simultaneously, as not all men need be called out at once to patrol the coast, and *Hälsingelagen* indicates that only an overseas expedition gave freedom from payment. By this time, however, there were other methods of raising troops for those with sufficient resources.

Perhaps the most important factor in the decline of the military *ledung* was the appearance of new types of soldiers and the mounted knight. A clue as to how new forms of service may have led to the decline of the *ledung* system may be provided by the actions of *hertigar* Erik and Valdemar in 1309. In the same document in which

[140] GL 312, . . . *tegn og träl.*

[141] Bill 2003 pp. 38–46. What archaeologists define as a cog and what medieval sources mean by the term may be quite different.

they ordered the sinking of ships to block the approach to Stockholm, they ordered one man from each *hamn* to be ready, 'night and day', with horse and weapons in case either *hertigar* or the *lagman* Birger Persson should summon them.[142] Two months later, they asked for a special payment of *penningar* to help pay foreign troops, under threat of the transfer of property to the *drots* before the following Candlemass. Excluded from this were *slottsfolk*, *bönder* on Church land or those who inhabited ancient Church property, and those who served properly equipped on horseback.[143] Tunberg's argument that land-based warfare became more important may be correct, but this in itself need not have led to the creation of armies (supposedly) based on mounted forces. Before the twelfth century, when influences from the European mainland become apparent, there are insufficient records of wars in Sweden, and recorded battles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Sweden seem to have been fought on land. Contrary to the situation in Norway, internal conflicts were decided on land, and invasions from Denmark usually came through Västergötland or Småland.

With the fines and payments for non-service in the military levy transformed into regular taxes, the Swedish kings of the Folkung Period had more resources at their disposal than their predecessors. With this they were able to pay their own forces, necessary to garrison their new fortifications and more easily summoned when needed. The definitive point for the arrival of the knight in Sweden is often taken as 1285, when Magnus Ladulås issued his Alsnö statute, giving freedom from taxation to those who served as mounted warriors.[144] Nevertheless, although he is recorded as dubbing a knight on Norrmalm in 1290, the number of dubbed knights (*riddare*) in Sweden remained small, the privilege being largely restricted to those closest to the king. Aside from the status-giving title, there appears to gave been little difference between knight and *väpnare*.[145] Among the earliest recorded *väpnare* was Magnus Gregersson, grandson of Birger Jarl, in 1286.[146] In 1288 he was made a knight, becoming

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[142] DS 1636 (31 October).
[143] DS 1646 (20 December).
[144] DS 895.
[145] The *väpnare* was a mounted soldier, often armoured, and possibly of noble origin.
[146] Another, Göthe Harald, is referred to in DS 1058, from 1292.

advisor to King Birger in 1291 and *lagman* in Västergötland by 1305.[147] In the late fourteenth century Bo Jonsson (Grip) was Sweden's wealthiest man, but he remained a *väpnare*.[148] Nor is the distinction always clear between *väpnare* and *svenner* or *knapar*. *Svenner* appear as followers of nobles, including bishops. No wealthy landowner was ever referred to as a *sven*, but *väpnare* were sometimes numbered among retinues. Without doubt the appearance of these paid troops altered the nature of armies between c 1250 and 1350. Such troops could be employed as full-time soldiers, and the *ledung* taxes provided a major source of income for the crown to pay for them.

Where did these retinues originate? Some may have been mercenaries or professional soldiers, which have existed throughout recorded history. The Norsemen themselves made up a large part of the original *druzhinas* of the Kievan princes. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the main source of hired troops for both Sweden and Denmark was Germany. No influx as large as this is known of in the thirteenth century, with the possible exception of the Germans allied to Filip Knutsson in 1251 and referred to in *Erikskrönikan*, but the reign of Magnus Ladulås did witness the arrival of the first known German knights as advisors in the king's service, notably Werner Brunkow.[149] Scandinavian historians often attribute the triumph of mounted warfare in their region to the battle of Fotevik in 1134, in which Erik Emune with a force of mercenary German knights and their followers destroyed the army of King Niels and his son Magnus. Whether this can really be attributed to the superiority of the mounted knight, as some German historians would have it, is debatable—nor can it be demonstrated that this led to Scandinavian adoption of mounted warfare. Little is known of the battle, but there are indications that the attack was unexpected and resulted in excessive loss among the defeated, perhaps because they had their backs to the sea and could not get back to their ships.[150]

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[147] Magnus first appears in sources in 1285 (DS 816), the documents referred to in the text being DS 919, DS 981 and DS 1422.

[148] *Väpen* now means both 'weapon' and 'coat of arms'.

[149] Ek p. 35. *Riddaren* Werner Brunkow's sale of some land is referred to in DS 996 (1289).

[150] Saxo 13:11, pp. 141–42, Roskildekrøniken pp. 28–29. Magnus, leading nobles and five bishops were killed in the rout. The Roskilde account is the earliest, and a pro-Niels/Magnus account. Saxo and others later adopted the opposite viewpoint.

When Swedish nobility chose to emulate the military fashions of their European cousins is not entirely clear. *Hákonar saga* mentions that Ulf Jarl and Birger Magnusson arrived in Västergötland in 1248 with a powerful *lið*, most of it mounted, but there is no way of knowing whether this receives mention because it was unusual, or whether this force would have fought mounted or dismounted by preference.[151] Unfortunately representations of Swedish warriors are virtually non-existent between the Viking Period and the late twelfth century, and none of these are in battle scenes. In neighbouring Norway and dependent territories depictions of warriors with sleeved surcoats or hauberks and kite shields, sometimes mounted, date from the mid-twelfth century.[152] Towards the end of the twelfth century Birger Brosa was represented on his seal as a mounted warrior with hauberk and kite shield, complete with heraldic device, and thereafter this is how Swedish noblemen wished to be depicted, much as their central and western European counterparts were. In the light of Norwegian and Swedish representations it might be assumed that the *hirð* in their armies took to the horse under the influence of their European cousins at some stage in the mid-twelfth century, but it not certain that they were not capable of fighting mounted earlier. The extent to which they may have fought mounted afterwards is also open to conjecture—given the terrain in the Scandinavian peninsular they must have often fought on foot, while many Scandinavian campaigns involved sea battles or attacks from ships.[153] We have no way of knowing whether it was simply representation of noble warriors that changed in Norway and Sweden, or their mode of fighting. If Norwegian and Swedish aristocracy did endeavour to fight mounted more than they had in the Viking era, the change should be attrib-

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[151] Hákonar saga 262, p. 148. The fact that they were mounted does not mean that they fought mounted; the soldiers of many armies, from the Vikings to the English of the Hundred Years War, travelled on horseback, but fought on foot.

[152] For instance, the mounted and dismounted Lewis chessmen (British Museum, London), the dismounted 'Sigurd' figures on the doorway of Hylestad church (Cultural Historical Museum, Oslo), the mounted knight on the Baldishol tapestry (Museum of Applies Arts, Oslo) and the dismounted knights on a wooden panel from a church, now in the Historical Museum, Bergen. Apart from the seals, the only twelfth-century depiction of soldiers from Sweden is on the altar front of Broddetorp church, Västergötland, the 'Massacre of the Innocents', which portrays a soldier on foot in scale or lamellar armour over a long garment.

[153] The *hird* was a warband or retinue, followers of king, noble or (earlier) chieftain.

uted to cultural influence and a perceived superiority of this mode of fighting as much as actual military superiority, since horsemen are not inherently superior in battle to foot soldiers. Throughout most of Europe in the High Middle Ages it was men who were already the warrior class and most practised in warfare who preferred to fight mounted, with the result that the infantry, those who habitually fought on foot, often consisted of poor quality levies.[154]

A similar transformation from an armed retinue akin to a warband to a class of lower nobility who served as armoured horsemen occurred in the same period in several peripheral areas of Europe.[155] This transition entailed the transformation of many of the retinue into landowners in return for service, which usually accompanied an increasing divide between aristocracy and peasantry. As in Scandinavia, the change occurred after the opportunities for reward by plunder and tribute (both internal and external) decreased, but also under western European cultural influence. As Schück suggested, there is no reason to assume that the *lið* and *ledung* of the Swedish laws were one and the same, or that the first was part of the latter. The nobility had always needed some form of permanent armed bodyguard. Indeed the word *sven* was not new, but appears on some rune-stones and in some place-names, suggesting that *svenner* may have been members of a king's or chieftain's *hirð*, possibly having authority over local communities in the same way that *tegnar* did over *tegnebyar*.[156] In this sense there was some continuity. However, the reforms of Magnus Ladulås and the creation of the *frälse* increased the potential force of mounted warriors. Ownership of a horse and the ability to fight on horseback had always been a status symbol, and this was now made available to a greater number of *bönder*.[157]

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[154] It should be noted that knights elsewhere in Europe sometimes fought on foot, when the situation demanded. On many occasions when they did so they were able to withstand mounted enemy, and so could other infantry if sufficiently motivated. See for instance, Bradbury 1985 pp. 41–57, and France 1999 pp. 156–65.

[155] The transformation from foot to mounted retinue occurred in Rus in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but the retinue (*druzhina*) remained a private retinue. In Poland a similar *druzhina* became transformed into a landowning class during the twelfth century. In the same period in Hungary the former mounted retinues of Magyar chieftains metamorphosed into landowning nobility. Even in Wales the retinues of the princes became armoured horsemen. See Rady 2000 pp. 16–35; Wolverton 2001 pp. 71–75; Sedlar 1994 pp. 208–09; Carr 2000 pp. 73–75.

[156] For instance, four *svenner*, who were also brothers, appear on rune-stone Sm16, in Värend, Småland.

[157] Long before the High Middle Ages, throughout the Scandinavian Iron Age,

The importance of warfare in early and high medieval society has often been emphasised. In the early Middle Ages the extraction of wealth through threat of force and plundering and its redistribution among the followers of chieftains or kings was essential to maintain their wealth and status.[158] Warfare also reaffirmed social and kinship ties among those taking part. Raiding and plundering was endemic, so much so that it is often mentioned only in passing by chroniclers.[159] If full-scale war broke out between two polities, often from an escalation of such activities, there were severe risks to both sides—loss of prestige, possibly a change in status from overking to tributary sub-king, and at worst loss of a king's life or kingdom. Loss of status increased the risk of being removed by one's own relatives or followers. For this reason mechanisms developed in Frankia and its successor kingdoms for the prevention of escalation.[160] Nevertheless, when wars were fought for higher stakes, there seems to have been a greater willingness (obligation?) to decide the issue by battle. In early Anglo-Saxon England and Ireland numerous kings were killed as a result. The situation may have been comparable in Scandinavia, which almost certainly had a number of kingdoms in the Iron Age. There is insufficient written evidence, but large deposits of weapons and equipment may represent the outcome of such struggles. The practice of depositing such offerings in bogs ceased at the end of the Roman Iron Age, after which archaeology tells us little of battles.

It seems that in many ways the practice of war in twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Scandinavia resembled that of earler medieval

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there is good evidence that warriors with horses were those who had the highest status—whether they rode in battle or to battle is another matter. As observed by Halsall, the distinction between cavalry and infantry is an anachronism when talking of the period 450–900, and the evidence that certain troops always fought on foot and others always mounted is dubious: see Halsall 2003 pp. 180–88. The same may be said of the period 900–c. 1200. See also Ilkjær 2000 pp. 112–14, referring to Jylland in c. 200 AD, Arrhenius 1983 pp. 62–67, Engström 1994 pp. 9–34, and J. Engström 1997 pp. 248–55, in which he argues that Vendel Period *svear* fought mounted, and Pedersen 1997 pp. 123–33, on evidence for mounted warriors in tenth century Denmark. Referring to the early Viking Period in Sweden, Adam of Bremen (admittedly not always a reliable source) noted that the *svear* became lords over other Scandinavian folk 'because they were the foremost warriors both on horseback and on ships.': ABG 4:22, p. 253.

[158] See, for instance, Reuter 1985 pp. 75–94.

[159] Halsall 2003 pp. 135–36.

[160] Halsall 2003 pp. 228–29.

Europe further south. When the object of a campaign was to weaken, intimidate or punish an enemy the land was devastated, but when higher stakes were played for a battle was sought. The events of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Iceland do not necessarily reflect what occurred in Sweden in the same period, but the warfare of the Icelandic sagas appears to reflect the Viking convention, albeit on a small scale. Despite the endemic violence of the thirteenth century, houses were not fortified in any way, and it was the convention to fight in the open.[161] A reading of *Sverris saga* suggests that the tactics of Sverre Sigurdson in Norway at the end of the twelfth century were sometimes unconventional, but his men were not always of the same mind, and on at least one occasion forced him to abandon his attempt to starve his enemies out by trapping them in a narrow fjord.[162] Nevertheless, the object of Sverre, as for his enemies, was ultimately to defeat his opponents decisively in open battle.[163] The practice of warfare is governed by convention and ritual as much as any other social activity, and it was the custom to determine the outcome of struggles in the open field, or often, especially in Norway, on the open sea or the waters of the fjords. Consequently, in Scandinavia battles were not only frequent by the standards of western Europe in the same period, but could be bloody. From the few sources available it appears that sieges were rare in Sweden before 1290 and the outcome of most twelfth and thirteenth-century campaigns was determined by climactic battles such as Älgarås (1205), Lena (1208), Gestilren (1210), *Olustra* (1234) and Sparrsätra (1248). Kings or other leaders apparently took risks, possibly by fighting in the front line—nor were they spared as they usually were in contemporary 'chivalrous' Europe further south.[164] Three of Knut Eriksson's

[161] The sagas which purport to tell of the century after the settlement may reflect a heroic ideal as much as reality, but this still gives an indication of how the writers thought warfare ought to be conducted. The sagas of the Sturlunga period are less heroic, but maintain many of the conventions. An 'ambush' consisted of surprising the enemy by confronting him unexpectedly, usually with more men, but rarely of attacking without warning or shooting from cover.

[162] Sverris saga 132, pp. 136–37.

[163] For an analysis of Sverre's strategy see Bagge 1996 pp. 21–25 and 33–51. Bagge argues that Sverre was an exceptional commander because of his speed of movement and ability to engineer surprise attacks, but there are difficulties in interpreting *Sverris saga*, as it was written under Sverre's supervision, and naturally eulogises his exploits.

[164] Such chivalry did not extend, of course, to the common soldiery or peasantry.

sons died at or after Algarås, the Danish nobles Ebbe and Lars Sunesen and Erik Knutsson's jarl Knut were killed at Lena and at Gestilren King Sverker and Knut's successor Folke Jarl fell. In Norway neither Jarl Erling Skakke nor his son King Magnus survived the defeats at Kalvskinnet (1179) and Fimreite (1184). Earlier, at Fotevik in Denmark (1134) five bishops were killed. It may therefore be argued that a change in the pattern of warfare to that of west and central Europe, in which nobility were less at risk, resulted from cultural influence. In Norway and Sweden evidence of 'chivalric ethos' appears only in the late thirteenth century.

Changes in social structure inevitably entailed changes in the structure of armies. The period 1000–1300 arguably saw the beginning of specialisation in arms, with mercenaries that habitually practised with certain missile weapons and the development of better siege artillery. In the thirteenth century the nobility in some regions increasingly saw mounted warfare as their proper function; it was not simply the owning of a horse that distinguished them from their inferiors, but the use of one in battle. Earlier those who kept a horse had been expected to fight either mounted or on foot as the situation demanded. This probably continued to be the case in Norway and Sweden, given the preponderance of hilly, forested and marshy terrain. As polities became more stable, administrative structures were built and the king (or kingship) acquired a status less dependent on military success, the risk to him resulting from failure in war decreased.[165] However, kings and lords were still expected to be trained as warriors from an early age and to appear as such in adulthood. The earning of the right to carry a sword and become a fully-fledged warrior remained an important rite of passage for noblemen, although there was probably less emphasis on warfare as specifically a young man's activity in the Middle Ages than there had been earlier. As in the early Middle Ages, royal or noble patronage, honours and titles could still be gained through success in war. Moreover, although the opportunities for plundering diminished at the end of the Viking Period, high medieval warfare retained many of the characteristics it had in the early Middle Ages. On the European main-

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Loss of life among the nobility of Christian Europe nevertheless increased as the effectiveness of infantry and its weaponry improved from the thirteenth century.

[165] See Chapter 11 on the king's status.

land and in Britain full-scale battles remained rare as they risked considerable loss, while success in battle did not guarantee benefits in large realms studded with powerful fortresses, a pattern that extended to Scandinavia towards the end of the period. The most common military campaigns throughout Europe continued to be raiding expeditions, the object of which was much the same as it had been earlier, with border regions such Västergötland and Småland at greatest risk, in this case from Denmark. Such expeditions were regularly launched by the Scots into northern England throughout the Middle Ages, where the sources indicate that their success was usually measured by the amount of plunder brought back.

There is no particular reason to assume that armies became more 'professional' as a result of the creation of a 'service nobility' and *frälse*, even if the variety of types of soldier increased. In both the Iron Age and the High Middle Ages leadership was largely restricted to those from the highest social class, but the potential for warriors to abandon an unsuccessful leader was greater in the age before the medieval idea of permanent loyalty to king or lord took hold. In both eras there was a close correlation between warrior ideology and political leadership. Leaders maintained an immediate retinue, whether *hirðmän*, housecarls (Sw. *huskarlar*) or household knights (or *svenner*) who were ready to fight at short notice, and there were a larger number of freemen who carried arms and were brought up in a warrior tradition, who could be summoned if necessary.[166] In the small kingdoms of Ireland, early Anglo-Saxon England and no doubt Iron Age Scandinavia, this 'warrior class' sufficed to fight wars. Kings of larger polities who were overlords of many magnates were able to summon them to provide troops. Generally speaking, this is how armies were raised during expansionist wars such as those of the Frankish kingdom in the eighth century and Scandinavian kingdoms in the Viking Age, but when such kingdoms adopted a more defensive posture where local defence was often required, the services of lesser folk were asked for, as in the Anglo-Saxon *fyrd* or Frankish *hereban*.[167] In order to minimise disruption to agriculture service was

[166] On the different names used for warriors in the Iron Age and Viking Periods, see Olausson 2000 pp. 133–37.

[167] On these, see Lund 1996 pp. 44–58, Abels 1988 pp. 58–67, and Reuter 1990 pp. 391–405, and 1991 pp. 143, 213.

provided on a rotational basis, one man from a group, whether it be family or village, serving in turn. The *ledung* system of Scandinavia is an obvious parallel to this.

As in the Iron Age and the Viking Period, so in the High Middle Ages; some men, landless, exiled or poorer members of the 'warrior class' must have become mercenaries who fought for a reward, sometimes in the hope of permanent employment or land on which to settle, but by the twelfth century the number of mercenaries was increasing. In addition, by then weapon and armour manufacture was no longer the local 'cottage industry' it had been in the Iron Age. There were numbers of well-armed and mounted soldiers in some regions, such as German *ministeriales*, that originated from outside the landowning class and achieved their status through service to kings and lords. Formidable mercenary companies capable of acting alone, however, were a phenomenon of the later Middle Ages in Europe, the first being the Catalan Company of the late thirteenth century.

Although on the face of it the potential to raise larger armies increased as polities became larger, in the Middle Ages before the fourteenth century this could only be done, with difficulty and considerable disruption to agriculture, by calling out a mass of poorly trained levies, usually in defence of the homeland. The size of armies in small kingdoms such as those of early Anglo-Saxon England and Iron Age Scandinavia must generally have been in the hundreds, but even armies in the larger Frankish kingdoms rarely numbered more than several thousand, and high medieval armies were comparable to these or slightly larger.[168] Nevertheless, although there were few permanent paid professional soldiers in Sweden in c. 1300, the growth in revenue from taxation created the potential for a standing army. As in so many other areas, the Scandinavian kingdoms were following a trend when this was written into their law codes in the thirteenth century. The raising of taxes in lieu of military ser-

[168] For estimates of the size of Iron Age armies in Scandinavia, see, for instance, Ilkjær 2000 pp. 136–37, and Skre 1998 p. 255. On early medieval armies in general, see Halsall 2003 pp. 119–33, and on the size of armies in the Middle Ages, France 1999 pp. 128–31. There were of course exceptions: because power was personal and not territorial in the Iron Age and polities and their leaders were not yet identified to the same degree with a given territory, there was always the possibility that a confederation with armies of many tens of thousands could assemble, which occurred occasionally in the Roman and Migration Periods.

vice occurred in many northern, central and western European kingdoms in the Middle Ages, both the *hereban* and the English *fyrdwite* having provided for this as early as the ninth century. In the thirteenth century the full potential of new forms of taxation was yet to be realised, and agricultural crisis, plague, devastating wars and social disruption adversely affected European economies in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Sweden suffered its share of problems, but the foundations for the administrative and financial system that was to be exploited by Swedish rulers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been laid in the period 1250–1300.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE KING'S LAND

8.1. *Uppsala öd*

As in so many other areas, attempts to uncover the methods by which Swedish kings raised finance in the pre-Folkung period begin with later evidence. Besides revealing some forms of taxation that are clearly old, this tells us what the kings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did not have. The relief taxes that could replace *ledung* service were almost certainly introduced after 1250. The king and his agents could raise finance from fines imposed for transgressions and from *dulgadråp* and *danarv*, but many of these too may have been introduced in the mid-thirteenth century or even later. Levies referred to in the laws of Götaland such as the *allmänningsöre* and those derived from the king's third of *allmänningar* (common lands) are of uncertain age. In addition the crown held *sysslor*, land administered on behalf of the king, but there is little evidence that this practice was at all widespread in Sweden outside Gotland (which was in itself a *syssla*), and Värmland, for which evidence is virtually non-existent before the fourteenth century. Whatever (and whenever) their origin, *sysler* had a greater importance in Norway and Jylland. By the late thirteenth century Norwegian *syslemenn* had become agents of the crown and the whole country was divided into *sysler*, akin to the Swedish *län* (see below). In Jylland the *syssel* corresponded to the *herred* (Sw. *härad*) of other Danish regions, each with a *ting* and functioning as judicial district for both secular and ecclesiastical authorities as well as having other administrative functions.

Prior to the mid-thirteenth century Swedish kings could draw finance from royal estates, land that belonged to the person of the king as opposed to an individual king's private landholdings. In his essay *Upsala öd* [sic] Henrik Schück attempted to show that *kungsgårdar*, especially those named *husaby* or *husby*, were located in such a way that they could have been centres for administrative sub-divisions in each *landskap*.[1] Despite a number of minor misgivings, his thesis

[1] Henrik Schück 1914a, 1–37.

has been accepted by many later scholars.[2] However, Schück relied on written sources for his interpretation, and there has been much archaeological work since 1914 which has contributed to the discussion. The term 'Uppsala öd', to which a king acquired rights after his election, appears to refer to crown domain (cf. ON *auðr*, 'wealth', OS *ødher*). In Snorri Sturluson's *Ynglingasaga* its origin is placed in the distant past, when the mythical forefather Yngvi-Frey reigned at Uppsala, and drew all wealth to him.[3] This tells us that contemporary Scandinavians believed it was an ancient institution, nothing more. *Upplandslagen* assumes that it was familiar, implying that it was old in 1296. An explicit link between *husaby*-sites and Uppsala öd is made in only one document from 1345, and there are no references to *husabyar* in any medieval histories or annals. Given the place-name evidence, there is good reason to believe that the name *husaby* is older than documentary records and that it refers to a specific type of site, but it is not impossible that Uppsala öd was an invention, designed to give sanction to rights claimed by the king.[4] Given Snorri's tale, it may have been created as late as the twelfth century. Either way, given its name it is probable that its centre was at Gamla Uppsala.[5] *Husaby* is not the only place-name associated with Uppsala öd, as several of the *kungsgårdar* of Västergötland listed in *Västgötalagen* include the place-name component *bo*, which also seems to have been an alternative name to *öd* in *Östgötalagen*.

Among crown possessions *husabyar* appear frequently in some of the earliest sources, and *husabymän* were the crown's servants. *Husaby*-placenames are concentrated in Svealand, but are also relatively common in Östergötland, Norway, Jylland, Fyn and Lolland. The *husaby* institution need not have originated at the same time in Norway, Denmark and Sweden, and neither *-by* nor *hus-* place-name components are useful clues. Both *-by* settlements and placenames beginning with *hus-* could be either late Iron Age or medieval in origin.

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[2] For instance, Lönnroth and Rosén disagree only on minor points, while archaeologists such as Hyenstrand and Wijkander have fitted *husabyar* into specific stages of their hypothetical *hundare* reforms: see Lönnroth 1940 p. 43, Rosén 1949 p. 116, Hyenstrand 1974 p. 118, and Wijkander 1983 p. 183.

[3] SSH, *Ynglinga saga* 10, p. 13.

[4] See, for instance, Grundberg 2000 and Petterson 2000 p. 53. Despite all his doubts about previous research and the evidence, Petterson (2000 p. 61) still concludes that *husabyar* were linked to royal power.

[5] Rahmqvist 1986 pp. 254–70.

Hus occurs in numerous compounds, especially donating structures or *gårdar*. In the Norwegian *Frostatingslagen* the name *hus* on its own is used to donate a *kungsgård*.[6] Nevertheless, the origin of some placenames may not be related to this, one alternative suggestion being that an old word (*h*)*us*, later modified to *os* in many placenames in parts of Sweden, meant 'running water', and that this name often became confused with the later *hus* in many studies.[7] The *husa-* component in *husaby* is generally (but not universally) accepted as a (genitive) plural form of *hus*, meaning building or structure. Opinions have differed on how big this *gård* might have been and how many *hus* it might have contained.[8]

Ståhle suggested that *husabyar* were 'ideal' *byar*, since the majority (he believed) corresponded to four *markland* and four houses. This was further explored by Gerhard Larsson, who thought that the four-*markland husabyar* were concentrated in Attundaland and Närke, but that those in other parts of Svealand were smaller, while Östergötland *husabyar* were planned on the basis of *mantal* rather than land area.[9] It is possible that many *husabyar*, and even other *kungsgårdar*, were established on a pattern if they were part of a network, but both theories make a number of assumptions, and the size of most *husaby-gårdar* before written records of their sale or exchange, which are rare before 1250, is uncertain. If correct, Larsson's theory suggests that most of Attundaland's *husabyar* were founded on a different basis from those in neighbouring *folkland*, perhaps at a different time, by a different king or under a different agreement with its magnates. On the other hand, if the *kungsgård* network was created gradually, it is possible that *husabyar* were established on the pattern of the nearest, which might have led to a preponderance of a certain size in a given judicial-administrative district. A measurement of land in *markland* would also mean that they were founded in the Middle Ages, in the late twelfth century at the very earliest, and even that assumes that the *markland* was in use in *kungsgårdar* before it came into widespread usage in the mid-thirteenth century. Ståhle himself thought the *husabyar* belonged to the thirteenth century.

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[6] FL 16.1: *Hús scal ármaðr gera konungi.*

[7] Envall 1960 p. 216. Envall mentions that the name *husum*, for instance, complies with this, these sites being near running water.

[8] See, for instance, Tunberg 1947b p. 338, who thinks that this implied a relatively small *gård*, and Elgqvist 1947 p. 77, who thinks it was large.

[9] G. Larsson 1986.

Many Swedish *husabyar* were near the sites of older centres, marked by burial mounds, hillforts, or other physical manifestations of power. The difficulty of linking *husabyar* with prehistoric remains is illustrated by the opposing views of two archaeologists, Wijkander and Ambrosiani, on the age of *husabyar* in Södermanland; the former argued that there is very little correlation between Iron Age cemeteries, or even runestones, and *husabyar*, while the latter pointed out that churches, trading sites and *ting*-sites are often all near *husaby*-sites, and that Wijkander had not understood the way in which cemeteries that belonged to *kungsgårdar* might have been sited.[10] As a result Wijkander placed the *husaby* institution in the twelfth century, Ambrosiani in the late Iron Age or Viking Period. Often these disputes turn on differences of interpretation—what did determine the siting of cemeteries, and how close does a place named *husaby* have to be to a cemetery or other prehistoric site for it to be associated with it? Hyenstrand points out that a quarter of *husaby*-sites are close to mounds, suggesting an association, but this is a case of seeing the cup as one quarter full rather than three-quarters empty.[11] In all cases the number of *husabyar* that can be directly associated with any given type of prehistoric site, mound, cemetery or hillfort, is insufficient to indicate a clear connection. Similarly, although some were near place-names suggesting cult-sites, they cannot be specifically associated with them, unlike some earlier *tuna*-names.[12] By contrast, a high proportion of *husaby*-sites have churches.[13]

Before the last quarter of the twentieth century most scholars favoured an early origin for the *husabyar*. Asgaut Steinnes, for instance, thought they originated in the Vendel Period, and that *svea* seaborne expansion accounted for their spread from Svealand.[14] Thereafter, he believed, their foundation continued into the Viking Period, occurring especially in the tenth century. More recently, scholars have favoured a Viking Period or early medieval origin for the institution. The concept of 'crown domain' is of course an anachronism in any case when talking of the Iron Age, but further than that it

[10] Wijkander 1983 pp. 135–38, Ambrosiani 1985 pp. 32–36. Wijkander measured 'closeness' of cemeteries to a *husaby* as 100 metres.
[11] Hyenstrand 1974 p. 118.
[12] See, for example, Hyenstrand 1974 pp. 103–07, Wijkander 1983 pp. 134–38.
[13] Wijkander 1983 p. 136.
[14] Steinnes 1955.

has been argued that the concept of ownership of land did not exist in the same sense as it did in the Middle Ages.[15] Nevertheless, this does not rule out the existence of *gårdar* over which kings or chiefs had special right of disposition or usage. An institution can remain and such *gårdar* could retain the name *husabyar* while right of disposition became transformed into legal ownership. The name Uppsala öd could similarly be re-interpreted in medieval law-codes, if it was not invented precisely to justify ownership.

Archaeological investigation has shown that some *husaby* sites were *gårdar* in the Vendel Period, but this does not mean that they were then named *husaby* or belonged to any king. There was a settlement at Husaby in Glanshammars *socken*, Närke, as early as the seventh century, with a hall surrounded by a palisade, but this disappeared in the ninth century and was replaced by a new site just to the north by the eleventh century.[16] It was very likely then that it was named *Husaby*. Throughout its history this place seems to have been a site for metalworking. Some of Sweden's iron ore was extracted in Närke, and *avrad* from some *byar* was paid in iron products later in the Middle Ages.[17] That many old *gårdar* or *byar* became *husabyar* later in their life is indicated by a number of double place-names, some surviving in documents and some to this day, in which *husaby* has been added as a prefix to another older name.[18] These include Husaby-Tallinge (1280), Husaby-Ärnavi and Husaby-Gismark (Fjädrundaland). As presumably happened in the Glanshammar case, the earlier names of many places must have been lost, leaving simply the name Husaby, and in a few cases a further name was then added to that. This has led to considerable confusion or disagreement about the origin and age of certain names, especially Husaby-Sjutolft (mentioned above), also in Fjädrundaland. Furthermore, many places with names including *husaby* subsequently lost that part of their name or changed their name altogether; the medieval village of Husaby-Gismark, for instance, is now called (Kungs)Vallby. In that instance the place-name component *kungs* ('king's') is a clue that the place

[15] Skre 1998 pp. 51–56.
[16] Ekman 2000 pp. 35–38.
[17] A. Lindkvist 2003 p. 347. Glanshammarr *härad* was called *Edhmædha* in the earliest source of 1430 (A. Lindkvist 2003 p. 339).
[18] See, for instance, Rahmqvist 1996 pp. 52 and 169.

was once a *kungsgård*, but the name *kungs* by itself does not tell us that a place was a *husaby*, only that it probably belonged to a king at some time.

While *husabyar* may have spread southwards from Svealand, it has also been suggested that they originated in Götaland, but found their greatest use in Svealand, where the king's power was weaker. It is questionable whether the foundation of a network of *kungsgårdar* in a chiefdom society such as that of Vendel and Viking Period Sweden was possible or necessary. The establishment of *kungsgårdar* independent of familial landholdings is not inherently improbable, but other factors make this unlikely.[19] Lordship was personal rather than territorial, and dependence on personal authority must have meant that the size of areas acknowledging a king's rulership could fluctuate. Co-rulership and division of kingdoms between relatives or rivals were probably not uncommon. If the *husabyar* were originally established as part of a network for the king's itinerary (see below) this makes Iron Age foundation an improbability. In addition, in pagan Scandinavia chiefs had sacral duties and the institution of kingship eventually acquired a special cultic aspect, but none of the *husaby*-sites that have an additional name to *husaby* have names connected with this. Their proximity to places with names including *-vi*, mounds or cemeteries may be the result of deliberate policy, but could simply be a product of centrality in settlement clusters. Some *husaby* sites are also close to the *tegneby* sites discussed in Chapter 2, which were also situated on fertile agricultural land, but this does not mean they were part of the same network, or belong to the same era. On the other hand, if the theory that *tegnebyar* were deliberately established by Knud the Great is correct, they might have provided a model for the first *husabyar*.

Although many of the sites that were named *husaby* may have existed before this, it is probable that a network of *husabyar* was established after the polity or polities became sufficiently large to require bases for the king and his itinerary to move around or to collect tribute, at least the size of the later *land*. Even if a kingdom was a heterarchy, a sufficiently powerful and respected king could create

[19] But see Löfving 2001a. He argues that the absence of alienation of lands outside the kin-group make the establishment of *kungsgårdar* improbable before the medieval period.

one, as Knud had with *tegnebyar*. It is also possible that notions of kingship from further south played a part as they began to penetrate Sweden.[20] After Olof Skötkonung kings of the *svear* and *götar* became the norm. Although their authority in Svealand may have been limited, they will have needed to travel there and *visthus* could have been created for this purpose. Several scholars have argued that the *hus* (plural) or *husaby* refers to these *visthus*, which appear in the later *landskapslagar* as places where tribute produce was gathered.[21] The importance of such *kungsgårdar* must have increased as the opportunities for Swedish kings to raise finance by plunder diminished during the eleventh century. As to why the local landowners of Götaland or Svealand would have accepted the establishment of *kungsgårdar*, we can only speculate, but some form of tribute may always have been given to kings by chiefs, and the construction of *visthus* to store it and the employment of agents to supervise them may have seemed natural when kings ruled wider areas. If the purpose of such *visthus* was to feed the king's itinerary, landowners may have favoured it as preferable to a descent on their own property. The foundation of *husabyar* would have suited the kings also, if they did not wish to be seen as a burden and annoyance to the local nobility.

A close Norwegian comparison with the Swedish *husabyman* is the *årman*, originally responsible for supervision of the king's *gårdar*. This position came to prominence in the reign of Olav Haraldson (St Olav, reigned 1015–28). His contemporary Olof Skötkonung is credited with founding a *husaby* in Västergötland, and similarly endeavoured to Christianise his realm. It is possible that he was responsible for the institution of the *husaby*-system in northern Svealand, but it is generally accepted that he had difficulty in exerting any authority beyond Sigtuna, in which case this would have been difficult, even with the backing of his overlord Knud the Great. It seems more probable, if Olof did found the first *husaby*, that this established a model for later ones. There is good reason, however, to place the foundation of most of the network in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The authority of kings in the eleventh century,

[20] This does not necessarily imply that *husabyar* were not associated with older sites or even older *kungsgårdar*.

[21] Elgqvist 1947 p. 77, Ståhle 1948 p. 135. See especially Palme 1958 pp. 139–66.

even relatively long-lived kings such as Stenkil, must still have been very weak in Svealand, particularly north of Mälaren, where we know that the progress of Christianisation was slow, and their ability to travel in Svealand may have been severely curtailed. The foundation of monasteries is instructive as a measure of a king's ability to allocate lands for his purposes. Although Stenkil is credited with the foundation of a bishopric at Sigtuna, there was no royal monastic foundation until the reign of Inge the Elder, and then only one. No foundation was made in Svealand until the reign of Knut Eriksson. By this time, kings were endeavouring to increase their authority north of Mälaren through alliances with jarls. The *husaby* network may nevertheless have taken some considerable time to develop; ironically, as it reached its fullest extent its erosion may already have begun.

It is undeniable that there was a link between administration and *husabyar* in the fourteenth century since the functions of the *husabymän* as *underlänsmän* are referred to clearly in *Dalalagen*.[22] Its *landskap* had only one *hundare*, a reflection of the sparse habitation and limited economic importance of the lands bordering on Västmanland before the fourteenth century, and this was divided into *tredingar* (thirds) for administrative purposes. If the region in question was Dalarna, this was still referred to as 'dala i væstmannalande' in Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*, despite having its own form of Västmanland's law.[23] *Dalalagen* tells us that its region had a *länsman*, and under him three *husabymän*, one to administer each *treding*. The *Manhelgdsbalk* of the same law code refers repeatedly to the *husabyman* in connection with the king's administration, alongside the *länsman* or another official such as a *domare*, as appropriate to the matter in hand. The correspondence between *husabyar* and other known administrative units is not so clear in the other law codes, and any attempt to link the two is bedevilled by problems in dating possible administrative changes, for instance from the posited *hund* to *hundare*, or the creation of the *husabyar* themselves. The majority of these *kungsgårdar* are known only from documents dating to the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, most of which concern sale or exchange.

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[22] For the purposes of this section it is assumed that the so-called *Dalalagen* belonged to Dalarna. Not everyone agrees, however; Elsa Sjöholm has argued that it may have belonged to another *landskap* close to Västmanland, Värmland.

[23] MEL, Bb 8:4.

Hälsingelagen lists the *gårdar* which belonged to Uppsala öd, possibly because some or all had been relatively recently acquired when the law was codified, since only parts of the coastal regions were settled in the twelfth century.[24] Nevertheless, those in Hälsingeland itself were all named 'hög', an indication that the sites were known and named in or before the Viking Period, which persuaded some scholars that the *kungsgårdar* might have been established when the settlements were, but archaeologists have rejected this.[25] The sites are distributed evenly up the coast or near the coast on navigable rivers, so would have been on the Norrland sailing route. Three of these *kungsgårdar* were in Hälsingland (Hög in Sunnarste, Norrala *socken*, Hög in Sunded, Högs *socken*, and Hög in Nordanstig, Jätundals *socken*), one in Medelpad (Näs, now Kungsnäs, in Silångers *socken*) and two in Angermannland (Sioboradh, now Säbrå, and Kutuby in Bjärträ). Kutuby (*Kuta*) and Kungsnäs were both *ting* places in the fourteenth century. All the *gårdar* except Säbrå eventually ended up as private manors in the late fifteenth century, but Hög in Sunded was still a *kungsgård* in Karl Knutsson Bonde's first reign (1448–57).

In Uppland Fjädrundaland's five *hundare* all possessed *kungsgårdar*, but two, Lagundsberg in Lagund and Gestereke in Simbo, are not known to have been named *husaby*.[26] In Tiundaland most of the ten historical *hundare* had *husabyar*. Norund had at least two, one of which, Husaby-Norunda, is recorded from 1280, when a *markland* was exchanged for another from Husaby Tolangh in the same *hundare*. The location of the latter is uncertain, but it was probably the *husaby* of Lena *socken*, although there is also a record of a 'talangi ernatum', a possible *husaby* in Ernatuna *socken*.[27] The last lay on the fourteenth-century border with Bälinge *hundare*, and may have been its *husaby*, since no other *kungsgård* is known within it. Husaby-Norunda itself was probably the *husby* of Tensta *socken*, which existed at least as early as the seventeenth century. Tensta was where the *ting* met in the fifteenth century. The existence of a medieval *husaby* in Rasbo is uncertain, but its Husby is likely to have been the 'Usby' mentioned in 1312. In Attundaland several *hundare* lack a *husaby*, but

[24] HL, KgB 11. *Pæssur æru upsalæ öþær—sunnastæ höghær, hager i sundaþy, höghær a norþstighi, næs ü silanger. Norþstigher i syoboo raaþ, kutuby.*
[25] I. Jonsson 1982 pp. 117–35.
[26] DS 4337.
[27] DS 1031 and DS 2218 (in which it is named *Ernatunum*).

Arlenningia and Langhundra have two.[28] In Seminghundra only one *kungsgård* named *husaby* is recorded, Husaby-Marchem (*Hwssaby-Marcham*), which was split up when half a *markland* was exchanged in 1298.[29] The whole *gård* may have fallen into the hands of Tyrgils Knutsson, who exchanged two *markland* from it with St Klara nunnery in 1304.[30] However, there had earlier been other *kungsgårdar* in this *hundare*, since Magnus Ladulås sold two, Harg and Skanald, in 1276.[31]

The situation in Södermanland is also unclear. Öknabo, Hölbo, Silbo, Röna, Vesterrek and Österrek (Östra Rekarne) all have two locations with or including the names Husaby or Husby, either *socknar* or *byar*. Uphunda appears to have had three, but one was recorded as located in the boundary *socken* of Flens and may once have been in Villatung *hundare*. Österrek may have been two *hundare* in the thirteenth century, Olustra and Byring. Husaby-Byring (Husaby *socken*) is known from a letter of 1292, and another in Jäders *socken*, called 'Hosaby', was recorded in 1413.[32] Öfra Tör and Ytre Tör contained one known *husaby* each, and Åkerbo, Junaker, Dava and Villatung none. However, with the exception of Junaker, in which no known *kungsgård* existed, there were other estates owned by the king in every *hundare*. Many of these were split up and parts of them exchanged or donated as early as the thirteenth century. Among the lands donated were Husaby-Aspö in Silbo and Husaby-Byring.[33] Since the latter was donated by Magnus Johansson to his wife in 1292 it must already have been in private hands.

There were also probably four *husabyar* in Närke, two of which are recorded in medieval sources (in 1303 and 1347), and another two now named Husby.[34] According to Shück, there was one in

[28] Schück argued that the Jarlabanke rune-stone (U212) provided a possible reason for the lack of a *husaby* in Vallentuna, since Jarlabanke claims to have created the *hundare* there. However, we have no idea how typical or atypical his actions may have been, as it was not the primary purpose of rune-stones to record these matters. If the king eventually created a *husaby* in every *hundare* except Vallentuna, this *hundare* would be a remarkable exception and it would also be a remarkable coincidence that a legible rune-stone explaining why has survived.

[29] DS 1215 and DS 1233.

[30] DS 1419.

[31] DS 618.

[32] DS 1696.

[33] DS 2314 and DS 1065.

[34] See DS 1403 and DS 4209. The first, in Glanshammars *socken*, was in the

Nora *socken* on the border, which may have been part of Västmanland in the thirteenth century. The other was in Viby *socken*, where the fifteenth-century *härad ting* (Grymosten) was held. The *härad* division is not recorded until the 1380s, which is certainly later than the establishment or naming of *husabyar*, but may reflect earlier administration. Given that early administrative divisions are unknown and that there are only four *husabyar*, there are no grounds for linking them with administration. A '*husaby* in Närke' (*Nerikia*), possibly one of the above, was also donated to Fogdö by Knut Jarl's daughter in 1270.[35] Other *kungsgårdar* also existed in Närke.[36] Västmanland had only one known *husaby*, in Kungsåra *socken* near the border with Fjädrundaland.

Although the *husaby* system clearly found greater use in Svealand than in Götaland, several *husabyar* did exist there. Most are in Östergötland, and the majority of these are concentrated in the coastal areas of the east, Hamarkind, Östkind, Lösing and Bråbo *härader*, the areas most easily reached by ships from Svealand. The exceptions are Husaby Visth in Hanakind (central Östergötland) and Husabyfjöl in Boberg in the west. The place-name component *bo*, which also occurs in two of these names, has been associated with administration in Götaland, Småland and Öland.[37] The link is clear in the *Drapabalk* of *Östgötalagen* mentioned above, referring to Uppsala *bo* (also called *Uppsala ödhe* in some manuscripts), Rods *bo* (*roþzs bo*) and Stavs and Stols *boen*. The *bo*-names of Östergötland are found in the central, north and west regions of the *landskap*. Three are *härad* names, Boberg, Valkebo, Åkerbo and Bråbo. It has therefore been suggested that the *husabyar* of the *svear* replaced an earlier *bo*-administration in Östergötland.[38] The explanation fits well with Husaby-Skedevi in Bråbo *härad*, which could well have been the site of the former *bo* because of its central location on the communication route.[39] Otherwise,

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hands of Tyrgils Knutsson before 1303, when the first document records him as exchanging it.

[35] DS 900.

[36] For instance, see DS 645, a gift of land in Sigharsiö by Magnus Ladulås to the Bishop of Strängnäs.

[37] *Bo* occurs as a place-name component throughout Sweden, but there is no indication that it had any connection to administration or *kungsgårdar* outside these regions.

[38] Henrik Schück, for instance, proposed that Husaby Skedevi in Bråbo was originally the site of the *bo* of the *härad*: see Henrik Schück 1914a pp. 27–28.

[39] Henrik Schück 1914a p. 28.

the distribution of the *husabyar* is difficult to explain, as there are six in the relatively small eastern area of Östergötland and three within Hamarkind, suggesting at most a partial replacement. Given their proximity to one another, it is unlikely that one of the three Hamarkind *husabyar* replaced another at any stage. Henrik Schück suggested that there was only one, Husaby-Aspvid, and that the others were originally part of the same complex, but became separate *gårdar* when they were split off. His judgement was made on the basis of their size in the High Middle Ages, yet the first recorded sale of any of these is of Husaby-Aspvid itself, by Valdemar's queen Sofie in 1280. This document records that the same *gård* (*curia*) was earlier bought by Valdemar, so it must have been in private ownership before that. Schück may have been correct that all three were once one *gård*, but there are other possible explanations.[40] As elsewhere, it cannot be ruled out that some places were named *husaby* because they were former *kungsgårdar*, or even named this after the term had ceased to be associated with royal administration, and Husaby in Mogata is not attested from any medieval document. Husaby in Skönberga is, however, known from a donation of 1348.[41] Another possibility may lie in the origin of the sites. The region was heavily forested, and if they were originally in use intermittently by *svear* enforcing tribute or using them as bases for seaborne journeys, all three could have been founded by them and later named *husaby*. These coastal *husabyar* in Östergötland may therefore have had very different functions from their counterparts in Svealand, if they were bases for raiding or tribute collection in the Iron Age and Viking Period. Some can have had no administrative function by the twelfth century.[42] As far as the replacement theory goes, it is likely that certain *bogårdar* in Östergötland were renamed *husabyar*, while others were not.

The clearest clue to early administrative division in Östergötland remains the *härad* boundaries, within which known or unknown *kungsgårdar* might have functioned as centres with some administrative and

[40] Henrik Schück 1914a p. 28.

[41] Half an *attung* was donated to Alvastra by a goldsmith, so part at least of this *husaby gärd* must have been in private hands by then.

[42] Henrik Schück (1914 p. 29) maintained that no *socken* division can have been in existence when the *husabyar* were established, since the *husabyar* were in different *socknar* in written records, but it is now recognised by many that in any case the *socken* organisation need have no connection to secular administration.

judicial functions. Several *härader* have or include the names of medieval *ting* sites, and some the component *bo*. These are in the west and north of the *landskap*, the *härader* in the east and south-east all containing the element *-kind(a)*, which a number of scholars have associated with Iron Age or Viking Age *svea* settlement. Schück attempted to construct a hypothetical six-*bo* administration of Östergötland. He argued that Visingsö, now just within the boundary of Småland, was the most likely *bo* of Lysings *härad*, since it was a *kungsgård* as far back as records exist and is situated on a water communication route, and that *husabyar* such as Husaby-Skedevi and Husaby-Aspvid were on the sites of former *bogårdar*.[43] As Schück observed, there are several possible alternatives for the sites of *bogårdar*, and the difficulty in uncovering them is aggravated by the presence of so many *kungsgårdar*, the product of Östergötland's links with the *Sverkerska ätten* and *Folkungaätten*. Since he himself suggested the possibility of more than one *bo* in a number of regions, for instance a hypothetical Brå (or Bråbo or Bråviksbo) in Bråbo *härad* and Skatnabo (the name of a *ting*) in neighbouring Memmings *härad*, both *härader* being small, his six-region *bo*-administration remains at best a guess. Any prehistoric pre-*härad* administration of Östergötland is virtually impossible to reconstruct: the most that can be said is that by 1130 the *härad* organisation existed and that places in which the king's agents were installed may have had names including *bo*, possibly inherited from prehistoric kings of the *götar*, and that others were called *husaby*. Östergötland *husabyar* were either renamed *bogårdar* or newly established *kungsgårdar*, which may have been renamed or founded at any stage from the eighth to the twelfth century.

The suggestion that *bogårdar* were once distributed across the whole of Götaland derives from the evidence of Västergötland. Both versions of *Västgötalagen* list the eight *kungsgårdar* which belonged to Uppsala öd: Vad, Gudhem, Long, As, Hålunda, Skalander, Vartopter and Kinda *bo*, named Ökull in the later version. One *husaby* in central Västergötland (Kåkinds *härad*) has been plausibly linked with

[43] A *hosaby sitos in wisendesa* is referred to in a letter of 1286 sent to Magnus Ladulås by Gerhard of Holstein (DS 915), and Schück suggested that *wisendesa* was a German misspelling of Wisingsö. In several later documents there are references to a *husaby* in the vicinity of or on Visingsö, the earliest of these being a testament by Johan Bær of land 'in Husaby in Grennum' to Alvastra. Grenna *socken* was nearby and in the same *härad* as Visingsö in the fifteenth century. See Henrik Schück 1914a pp. 29–30.

Olof Skötkonung, who was baptised there according to the king list. He may have founded it when he became king of both *götar* and *svear*, or after being driven from Svealand. The nearest *bo* was Ökull, and how any administration may have been divided between the two is not known, but Ökull was obviously still retained as part of Uppsala öd when the later *Västgötalagen* was written. Curiously, there is another *husaby* in the same *härad*, in Forsby *socken*, which Schück thought was a replacement when the first was donated to the bishop of Skara. Alternatively, it may have been named after the Middle Ages, since it does not appear in any source before the Vasa period. In Småland there are also a greater number of *husabyar* than corresponding *bo* names.[44] A third Husaby was situated in Kinda *härad*, and there is a fourth in Dal, near the northern border of Västergötland, although there are no medieval records of these. If they did have any administrative function in the Middle Ages, either of districts or other *kungsgårdar* (which is not certain), they are sufficiently distant from any of the listed *bogårdar* to have functioned at the same time.

In Västergötland *bogårdar* are distributed on level settled land or communication routes across the northern part of the *landskap*. They may have an earlier origin than *husabyar*. Tunberg noted that Vadsbo *härad* was named after Vads bo, although re-naming of districts can never be ruled out.[45] If the *bogårdar* represent ancient *kungsgårdar*, influence over the southern part must have been limited.[46] They probably remained intact as *kungsgårdar* well into the medieval period since Västergötland was not exposed to the same level of *svea* influence as Östergötland. Apart from Vadsbo, several other medieval *härader* have the same names as *bogårdar* within them: Vartopta, Gudhem and possibly Åsa. Some medieval *härader* apparently contain the names of the *bogårdar* listed in the law codes but are in different regions, such as As *härad* and Kinda *härad*. The latter, however, may have

[44] Henrik Schück 1914a pp. 31–32.

[45] Tunberg 1947b p. 333. For some reason he concludes from this that *bogårdar* were founded in the Migration Period. Even if *bogårdar* are older than the *härad* it is difficult to say how much older, and one is also confronted with the problem of when the *härad* appeared.

[46] This problem would still have existed even had Halland been a part of Västergötland and provided another *bogård* near the coast, as Schück argued, since there would have been a huge area without a *bogård* between it and those in northern Västergötland.

been part of an old Kinda bo region including Valle and Kåkinds *härader*. This does nevertheless illustrate the dangers of locating hypothetical *bogårdar* according to medieval *härad* names, as Schück did for Östergötland. The medieval *härad* division of Västergötland covers the *landskap*, although the smaller *härader* are in the more heavily settled region where the *bogårdar* are located.

At least three *husabyar* also existed in medieval Småland, in Finnveden, Värend and Ambörd, the last listed as situated in neighbouring Möre in a document of 1299.[47] In written sources Värend, Finnveden and Niudung comprised Tiohärad, while the rest of Småland was divided into eleven other *land*. Finnviden's division into districts named Västbo, Östbo and Sunderbo probably reflects a pre-*härad* division. Similarly, fifteenth-century Rumblaborghs Län, the other Småland region bordering Västergötland, included two divisions named Norra and Sudhra (södra) Vidhbo.[48] Asbo may contain the name of an earlier *bo*-site or region. Leaving aside Visingsö, which is near the border, no other *husabyar* or *bogårdar* are known from other areas of Småland. Given that there were very few *kungsgårdar*, all evidence suggests that royal influence in Småland was weak until the wealthier *bönder* were able to serve as *frälse*. Since there is no known connection with Uppsala öd or kings of the *svear* and *götar*, Småland's *bogårdar* may have been linked to royal power only in an earlier era, possibly when the *bogårdar* of Västergötland also came into being, held by chieftains who served Götaland kings or even Danish kings, but this is highly speculative. They may have no connection to any king outside Småland. It is also probable that places later known as *ting* sites, such as Ekesio in Niudung and Junabäck in Tveta, if they were much older than written records, were in the hand of local magnates. Swedish kings also had limited power in other partially inhabited regions such as Värmland, where only one Husaby is known of, in Orust *härad*. How this was founded remains a mystery, since this region showed strong Norwegian influence, including the existence of *sysslor*, during the Middle Ages.

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[47] DS 1291. It was in Högsby *härad* in Ambörd. The Finnveden *husaby* (Bolmsö *socken*) is first named in DS 1999, and that in Skatelöfs *socken*, in Värend, in DS 2689.

[48] Niudung also borders on Östergötland. In Rumblaborghs Län Tveta and Vist bordered directly on Västergötland, the Vedbo territories being to the east of them.

Öland was an important strategic and commercial centre throughout the Iron Age and medieval period, and has several *bo*-named *härader*, Åkerbo, Förbo, Slätbo, Borbo, Gorbo and Möcklebo. There is no certainty that any are named after *bogårdar*, and (as noted above) some are known to be named after villages that are unlikely to have acquired their recorded names, or even to have existed, before the eleventh century. This does not rule out an earlier name for these *härader*, still with the *-bo* suffix, like that preserved in the case of Åkerbo. As in the case of Östergötland and Småland *härader* with *bo* names that cannot be easily explained, the past existence of *bogårdar* remains a plausible explanation for these names, but some may simply have been named *-bo* in imitation of older *härad* names, or because the *bo* suffix was associated with administration. The one place on Öland that almost certainly was a *kungsgård*, possibly a centre for the surrounding area, is Svibo, in Ventlinge *socken* at the island's southern end. Land from there, 'which kings who came before me owned', was donated to Riseberga by Knut Eriksson.[49] Twelve *attungar* from a *villa* there ('Sveabodh'), probably the same land, were donated to Riseberga nunnery by Erik Knutsson on the day of his coronation, a donation later confirmed by Johan Sverkersson, who referred to it as 'possessiones nostras', and then in 1226 by Erik Eriksson. Birger Brosa was given land in the area as a *syssel*, which may imply a connection with the *ledung*. His land need not have been the *gård* (later *by*) in Ventlinge itself, as the farming area in neighbouring Ås *socken* was named Sviboäng.[50]

According to *Västgötalagen*, referring to Uppsala öd, 'these lands were never pledged; they were always possessed by the king who ruled the land'.[51] *Hälsingelagen* further enunciates the same rule: 'These *gårdar* may not be exchanged or sold by the crown nor anything which belongs to them'.[52] Nevertheless, even allowing for the difficulty in distinguishing royal estates from private land, it is quite clear that

[49] DS 144 and DS 185. Possessions belonging to the same *gård* were referred to as belonging to Birger Brosa and Ulf Fase in Johan Sverkersson's period, but it is not clear that this was the whole *gård*, so it cannot be concluded from this that it was a station for the *ledung* fleet.

[50] Sw. *äng*, 'meadow'.

[51] VgL 2, Mjölnöbalk 8. There is also a statement that *þem ma aldrigh vetae*, which Schluyter translated as 'these (lands) may never be loaned'. Schluyter 1877 p. 698.

[52] HL, Kb 9.

even before 1290 many were donated, sold or exchanged by successive kings. Precisely when the preclusion on alienation of crown lands originated will never be known. Both *Västgötalagen* and *Hälsingelagen* date to the fourteenth century, but all the law codes include a mixture of recently introduced and obsolete statutes and provisions. The problem was treated exhaustively by Jerker Rosén in his study of alienations before the end of the Folkung period. A clear attempt was made to distinguish different types of crown lands and lands owned by the king's family in documents, but the terminology is not always clear to us. Crown lands were often referred to in documents as 'bona regalia', 'bona coronae' or 'bona acquisita'.[53] There seems to be little distinction between *bona coronae* and *bona regalia*, but the third term often implies ownership by the king's family, rather than the crown as an institution, even when *patrimonium* is not accompanied by a possessive pronoun. The origin of such possessions is sometimes further defined by the expression *bona patrimoniala et acquisita*, but it is frequently difficult to distinguish crown land from private possessions of the king's family. Use of words such as *mansio* or *curia* gives no clue to their origin.[54]

In addition there are references to 'bona vacantia', wasteland or empty regions over which the crown had a right of disposition. By 1130 in Västergötland and Småland Swedish kings laid claim to one third of all *allmänningar*.[55] Hence the records of donations of one third of certain wilderness regions in letters of Erik Knutsson, Erik Eriksson and Magnus Ladulås.[56] It is probable that the kings had the same rights over other natural features or resources as English or German kings, over navigable rivers and their banks, public roads, harbours, fisheries and sources of minerals or ores. Parts of such possessions could easily become incorporated into the crown domain.[57] While it may be assumed that a term such as 'ex regio iure', as used in Knut

[53] Rosén 1949 p. 22.

[54] See, for instance, Johan Sverkersson's 1219 donation, DS 181.

[55] See SLL 5, *Västgötalagen*, p. 155.

[56] Erik Knutsson's confirmation of the donation of one third of forests in Flata and Nutabult, Östbo *härad* (DS 139), Erik Eriksson's donation of one third of two *bol* in Grevbäcks sn., Västergötland (DS 216), and Magnus Ladulås's donation of Hattäsen forest, Västergötland, in his dowry (DS 2866). The Grevbäcks land was the subject of several disputes between Alvastra monastery and neighbouring landowners (for instance, see DS 3678).

[57] Rosén 1949 pp. 44–45.

Eriksson's 1167 donation to Julita nunnery, refers to crown land, it is not clear whether this land was part of Uppsala öd, or other land over which the king had rights of disposal.[58] *Allmänningar* were certainly donated to Cistercian foundations in the twelfth century, as a result of which many waste areas were brought under cultivation. Fisheries appear frequently in records of their possessions, and were the subject of many disputes, since the boundaries on common land were often vague.[59]

The origin of many *kungsgårdar* is impossible to uncover; they may have been inherited, bought, donated, confiscated or taken as fines. Since records of land ownership must often have been incomplete or vague, particularly after numerous exchanges and sales, it would not have been difficult for a king or regent, deliberately or inadvertently, to 'transfer' *kungsgårdar* to his own family's inheritance. The origins of many of the lands disposed of by kings are not clear from the extant documents.[60] Some was clearly confiscated from defeated rebels, such as Svärdsö, donated by Magnus Ladulås to his trusted friends (*fidelibus nostris*) Andreas and Israel in 1286.[61] Earlier, Birger Jarl seems to have redistributed confiscated land to his sons, actions for which he obtained, having presumably sought, papal approval.[62] His son Bengt had acquired lands 'ex donacione celsitudinis regiae', and one may suspect that land in Uppland acquired by Gregers (where there was almost certainly no Folkung land before 1250) came from the same source.[63] But extant sources suggest that disposal of crown lands as if they were family lands was also particularly rife in the period after Birger Jarl's victories. Several *husabyar* ended up in the hands of Birger's sons, such as Husaby-Enhörna in Södermanland, owned by Erik. Later Valdemar gave away a *curia* in Husaby (Östra Husaby *socken*, Östergötland) when his daughter married Gerhard of Holstein, and the patron's right for the church in the same *socken* to Linköping cathedral's canonry (also in his daughter's

[58] DS 67.
[59] For instance, Erik Eriksson's confirmation of Varnhem's ownership of a *specialiter piscacionem* by Gullspångsälven (river). See DS 365 and DS 367.
[60] Rosén 1949 p. 47.
[61] DS 914.
[62] ST 1, 102.
[63] DS 753.

name).[64] Bengt Birgersson sold another eight *attungar* from the same *socken* in 1281, and loaned thirteen *öresland* in Husaby-Vingra in Färentuna, Uppland in return for service.[65] Over half of Bengt's donations were from *socknar* that contained crown domain lands.[66] The *Folkungaätten* were arguably in a sufficiently powerful position to treat crown domain as their own between 1251 and 1290, but not all these lands need have been part of Uppsala öd when they were thus disposed of. As a result of confiscations both *Erikska ätten* and *Sverkerska ätten* lands ended up in their hands, and the *Folkungaätten* may not have known of their origins. Furthermore, many *socknar* will have included both crown domain and family lands, between which it may have been difficult to distinguish.

Royal domain was disposed of by sale, exchange or donation. The last was by far the most common form of recorded alienation before 1250. Donation was not necessarily seen as an irreversible act, however. The same possessions were frequently donated repeatedly by successive kings: for instance, Johan Sverkersson donated 'possessions, which belonged to us in Gudhem', lands whose donation by Knut Eriksson and his relatives had already been confirmed by Pope Alexander III (1168–77). Similarly, Knut Eriksson's donation of a fishery in Älvkarleby, 'for the salvation of all my successors and predecessors', was made again by Magnus Ladulås in 1286, and the repeated donation of Svibo has already been mentioned.[67] It is highly improbable that these lands were taken back in every case before being donated again; rather, donations by new kings were confirmations of those their predecessors had made. The clearest statement of this is in Erik Knutsson's donation of a *treding* in the common forest of Östbo *härad* 'as my predecessors the glorious kings Sverker, Erik, Karl and Knut and also Sverker did'.[68]

In the reign of Magnus Ladulås evidence of alienation of crown land increases dramatically. In part this may be the result of increasing recording of transactions, rather than evidence of increasing disposal of crown land, but of especial interest is the appearance of

[64] ST 1, 125 and DS 646.
[65] DS 726.
[66] Rosén 1949 pp. 76–77.
[67] DS 63, DS 923 and 924.
[68] DS 139.

new forms of disposal and new recipients. Before 1250 the main beneficiary was the Church, especially its monasteries, and successive kings clearly accepted that crown land could be alienated for this purpose. Such donations, exchanges and sales continued, but the beneficiaries of Magnus Ladulås's generosity were often also bishops and canonries. The land had various origins. For instance, half of a donation that went to Klara nunnery when it was founded in 1286–88 was crown land that may previously have been common land.[69] In the Stockholm archipelago religious foundations were given whole islands together with the rights to the natural resources on them, donations of more than one third, which makes them unlikely to have been *allmänningar*.[70] Magnus also made a number of allodial donations in return for service, not to mention sales. The change in practice is related to changes in forms of service by the nobility, for which the Alsnö statute provides the clearest evidence, together with a decline in importance of the old *kungsgårdar* as sources of royal income. New taxes and new forms of administration made the *husabyar* disposable.

It would be incorrect, however, to assume that Magnus Ladulås was destroying all the royal estates, many of which must still have provided income. As in the defining of the new *hertigdöme* boundaries, there is evidence of a change in the formulae of documents concerning alienation. Rosén believed that the correct interpretation of the ban on alienation of *kungsgårdar* was that the size and income from these lands should not be reduced by any transaction.[71] Therefore exchanges could be made, provided that the crown was sufficiently compensated, a rule similar to that which applied for Church land in canon law. The intention of the rule was to protect crown income, but when it originated and how it was originally interpreted is a mystery. According to the legend of Sigfrid, Olof Skötkonung donated two *gårdar* to the Skara bishopric as early as the eleventh century.[72] The legend is thirteenth-century and may reflect the practice of that time, when alienation of crown possessions was acceptable as long

[69] DS 922, DS 972, DS 975.
[70] See G. Bolin 1933 pp. 324–25. This occurred also in Denmark, as evidenced by the case in KVG p. 30.
[71] Rosén 1949 p. 61.
[72] SRS 2:2, pp. 362–368.

as they went to the Church. Whether the crown was always compensated in the twelfth and early thirteenth century may be doubted, since there are indications that these donations were regarded as temporary and needed renewing by successive kings. In the reign of Magnus Ladulås, however, there is evidence that an effort was made to avoid reduction of crown lands. The measurement of land in *markland* enabled such transactions to be quantified. When Magnus sold land to the St John monastery in Eskilstuna he promised to compensate the crown fully, in order that 'he and his successors would not have any pretext to take back what had been disposed'.[73] How common this practice was is uncertain, as most documents recording sales, donations or loans do not tell us.

8.2. *The nature of administration before 1250*

A variety of functions have been suggested for the *husabyar* and *bogårdar*. Their distribution and association with Uppsala öd suggests a link with administration, but what sort of administration? The existence of taxes such as the *gengärd*, derived from the right of the king to *gästning*, board and lodging, gives a clue to the nature of kingship before the thirteenth century. Kingship was itinerant. The king and queen and their court, together with their retinue and horses, needed feeding and accommodating. Studies of itinerant kingship in Germany during the eleventh century have shown that itineraries were planned weeks or even months ahead, with strategically situated markets supplying the needs of the court on its journey.[74] The retinues of early Swedish kings may not have approached the size of those that accompanied the Ottonian and Salian emperors, which sometimes numbered well over a thousand, but their upkeep could nevertheless have required a considerable outlay in a poorer country. Throughout western and central Europe even the homes of important nobility required several days' warning to prepare for the arrival of their lords.

In Germany regular journeys were not possible (nor perhaps desirable) in regions where the king-emperor did not have the necessary familial estates, episcopal centres, royal estates or royal monasteries

[73] DS 638.

[74] The landmark work in this field is Müller-Mehrtens 1980. See also Vogtherr 2000 pp. 206–19, and Noble 1981, a review of Müller-Mehrtens's work.

and monastic manors to accommodate his court.[75] The king therefore spent the majority of his time in regions where he could count on full political and economic support. In many ways the situation in twelfth-century Sweden was similar; it had its own distinct settlement regions in Svealand, Östergötland and Västergötland, separated by more sparsely populated areas. In the early twelfth century outlying regions such as Småland, Värmland, Norrland and Dalarna lacked the necessary bases and resources. It was difficult for a dynasty whose landholdings were largely confined to one region, historically either Västergötland or Östergötland, to exercise any effective control over others.

Nothing in any written source indicates clearly the original function of the *husabymän*. He may have been a manager of the king's estate, a tribute gatherer, or both. It is nevertheless probable that many *visthus* referred to in the *konungabalk* of *Upplandslagen*, to which the *skeppvist* and other levied produce was taken, were located in *husabygårdar*.[76] The *skeppvist* was almost certainly imposed after 1250, and the ultimate responsibility for the *vist* lay with the *länsmän* in the Svealand *landskapslagar*, by which time royal castles had become the most important *visthus*.[77] Before this it is possible that many *husabyar* functioned in the same way as the *villae regia* (royal vills) of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, referred to as *cynges tunas* in the Old English version of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.[78] They existed not only in Northumbria but also in Mercia and Wessex, from which we have eighth-century sources specifying the amount of produce. By that time the vill was the centre of a wide area, from which produce (*feorm*) could be collected for the king. How regularly dues were collected is not certain, but in times of peace the king and his court presumably attempted a fairly regular *iter*, and must have visited these places. In Sweden *gästning* could be interpreted in such as way that all *bönder* contributed to the king's upkeep in their region. Like the *husabyar*, the English *villae* or *tunae* were later incorporated into

[75] See Bernhardt 1993 pp. 60–64.

[76] The *visthus* was a building or possibly a group of buildings in which provisions (*vist*) for the king, his retinue, or his agents were stored.

[77] UL KgB: 10, 2.

[78] Campbell 1986b p. 109. The *tun* element, of course, bears comparison with the much-discussed Swedish place-name element *tuna*, but this belongs to an earlier period than that covered by this study. One such name also occurs in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

a more regularised administration, with some taxes paid in cash. The ending of the old food-rent and its replacement probably occurred when it was no longer necessary for English kings to tour their lands so regularly in order to govern them, after the Mercia and the Danelaw became part of a single kingdom of England dominated by Wessex, but a number of vills became administrative centres and were recorded in the *Domesday Book*.[79]

It is by no means certain that all free landowners contributed to the upkeep of the king's court in pre-Folkung Sweden. The requirement to do this is in some ways analogous to the requirement to maintain the *ledung* fleet. If the *hamna* originally designated districts that equipped and manned the king's ships, and the *åttinger* areas that originally equipped and manned ships of aristocracy who could be called upon to raise a fleet for the king, *bönder* in the latter regions would not have given services directly to the king. Similarly, it is possible that the *bönder* of some districts did not contribute direct dues for the upkeep of the king's retinue, and we may surmise that kings endeavoured to extend the *husaby* system partly in order to increase the payments of produce. It is not clear that the responsibilities of a *husabyman* extended beyond the king's land, nor that the area from which they collected produce necessarily corresponded with the *hundare* or *treding* boundaries of the fourteenth century (or, for that matter, reconstructed earlier *hund* boundaries). The position of the twelfth-century *husabymän* might have been comparable to that of the Norwegian *årmenn*, who were originally supervisors of royal *gårdar*, but whose functions expanded afterwards, or even German *ministeriales*, whose status was unfree.[80] Some *ministeriales* became warrior knights, but others administrators. *Husabymän* were probably drawn from those who lived in the *bygd* where the *husaby* lay; such is thought to have been the status of the *husabymän* of Dalarna and the *hövitsmän* of Tröghbolagh in the fifteenth century.[81]

The bulk of the produce collected in a *visthus* might have been from the *husaby* itself, or from surrounding *kungsgårdar*, or possibly from the surrounding farms of the *bönder* as well. Supervision of *kungsgårdar* that lay around the *husaby* or *bo* could have been one of the

[79] See especially P. Sawyer 1983 pp. 280–81.
[80] See Arnold 1985 pp. 20–37.
[81] See Palme 1958 pp. 139–66.

husabyman's most important functions. The *husabyman* is probably identical to the king's *gårdsfogde* or *gårdsförvaltare* of *Upplandslagen*, although it is possible that these may be alternative names for those with equivalent functions in *kungsgårdar* that were not considered part of Uppsala öd. Either way, these officials seem to have been responsible for the management of the crown lands in each locality. However large the area from which the *husabymän* collected their produce, it is reasonable to assume that their function was to provide the resources necessary to prepare for any royal visit, and if possible some excess income for the king.

From time to time the theory has been expounded, notably by Steinnes and more recently Mats Larsson, that the *husabyar* had a military function. Ståhle also linked his four-*gård*, four-*markland husabyar* to the *ledung* organisation. Many of the *hövitsmän* that appeared in the Folkung Period, often seen as the successors of the *husabymän*, clearly did have a military function. However, there is no evidence that *husabyar* or Västergötland *bogårdar* were fortified, unlike many of the sites supervised by *hövitsmän* in the Folkung period. Any suggestion that they functioned as centres for the control of the local populace can therefore be ruled out. The strategic location of many *husabyar* has often been noted, but sites are frequently militarily important precisely because many were strategically placed in settled areas and on trade and communication routes.[82] The observation that many were situated on waterways is not necessarily evidence that they functioned as calling or collection points for a *ledung* fleet, since waterways were the easiest and most important communication routes in the Mälar region and the *husabyar* were therefore equally accessible to cargo ships. On the other hand, *husabyar* probably had multiple functions, of which one may have been as collection points for the men and ships of the *ledung*. This appears to have been the case in Norway, as *Gulatings lov* says that ships should be collected where they have been since ancient times, but if there is no suitable land the king will provide it, if a 'fjärding' is available.[83] There may have

[82] Steinnes 1955. Following up on a more recent article by Steinnes (1959), Schei (1998) has pointed out the association of farmed Holland *gårdar* with the Husebysites (from ON *hollandi*, pl. *hollandr*, 'ally' or 'assistant'), thus emphasising that the Norwegian *husebyar* too probably had a multiplicity of functions.

[83] GL 305.

been specific sites for the boathouses that covered the ships.[84] Larsson's suggestion that *husabyar* were also collection points for the *landvärn* is plausible but there is even less evidence to support it.

The relatively even spatial distribution of *husabyar* over Uppland, Södermanland and Hälsingland indicates that successive kings endeavoured to extend their influence into every settlement area. In England, France and Germany there was a protracted battle to extend crown domain, usually in order to counter the power and resources of the secular nobility, and often at their expense. There is no evidence of serious conflict in Götaland, but conflict over land may have been a cause of friction between king and aristocracy in Svealand long before Birger Jarl's period—it was possibly a contributory factor in the expulsions of eleventh-century kings such as Olof Skötkonung and Inge the Elder from the region, alongside their championing of a new universal religion which itself had implications for local independence.

It cannot be ruled out, as Henrik Schück suggested, that the *hund/hundare* division in Uppland, almost certainly established for judicial purposes, was used as a basis for the establishment of some *husabyar*. On the other hand, if *husabyar* or their predecessors were established with the intention to extend the king's influence into as many areas as possible, they would tend to conform with given settlement districts, just as judicial divisions would. Although *hundare* boundaries followed natural boundaries, they also generally conformed to settlement districts, especially as some of these 'boundaries' were unoccupied land, so the distribution of *husabyar* might approximate to one per *hundare* without being established on that basis. The visiting of as many regions as possible was a prerequisite for early medieval itinerant government, and the strategically spaced *husabyar* of Svealand regions would have secured the supply of the royal retinue or that of the king's agents, which could be drawn either from the whole region around them, or from the produce of royal estates in their vicinity. The Uppsala öd *kungsgårdar* of more outlying regions such as southern Norrland (Hälsingland, Medelpad and Ångermanland) were probably used as bases for periodic tribute-gathering expeditions, which must have involved a substantial

[84] GL 307.

number of men for reasons of safety. Their even distribution on or near the coastline does not necessarily imply that the inland parts of these territories were divided into administrative units, each managed by a *husaby* at the time when these were created, nor that each unit was inherited from an ancient petty kingdom.[85]

The correspondence between Uppland *hundare* and *husabyar* cannot in any case be shown to be exact, still less so in Södermanland and other *landskap*. The exception is the *landskap* of *Dalalagen*, where one *husaby* was created to administer each *treding*. Schück's suggestion that administrative changes were responsible for the discrepancies elsewhere is plausible, but is based on the assumption that the arrangement in *Dalalagen* reflects the original situation in other older *land*.[86] However, the location of *husabyar* in regions of Svealand that were settled earlier is more likely to have been determined by earlier *kungsgårdar* or other significant sites, not necessarily on the basis of one per *hund/hundare*. The locations of several *kungsgårdar* coincide with *tuna*-named *byar* or *socknar*, whose siting near ancient man-made mounds or other significant sites has been noted by many archaeologists. The place-names of some *kungsgårdar* also give a clue to an early origin, for instance Ludgudhavi in Södermanland, which was probably a pagan offering place.[87] All such locations may have been cult-sites or meeting places, very possibly combining two or more of these functions with that of *kungsgård*. As a result the locations of some medieval *husabyar* and *bogårdar* coincided with *ting* sites or religious centres, but their functions need have had little in common with their Iron Age or pagan Viking Age antecedents.

The network of *husabyar* was presumably established between the late Viking Period and the Folkung era by a variety of means. Ancient cult sites may have been inherited from the pagan past, when kings

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[85] I. Jonsson 1982 p. 119. He rejects the kingdom theory, but assumes delineated administrative districts. The evidence for early administrative division is based largely on two sources, *Hälsingelagen* and the 1541 *jordeböcker*. Lesser districts were called *sköllar* in Hälsingland, *fjärdingar* in Medelpad and *sjättingar* in Ångermanland. No clear connection between these and *socknar* can be shown. Selinge concluded that the Medelpad *skeppslag* was originally a judicial district, given a name taken from Svealand, presumably (although he does not state this clearly) at the time when the *ledung* or its taxes were imposed in Norrland. See Selinge 1979 pp. 139–51.

[86] VgL 1, MB: 8. Compare HL, KgB 11.1. As noted above, Dalarna was considered a part of Västmanland.

[87] *Lud-godens-vi*.

carried out religious functions that were important to the whole community.[88] Others may have been established by local agreement, having been land over which no single local landowner had a clear right. Many *husabyar* were secondary villages of small size, such as Husby in Vendel.[89] It is improbable that *husabyar* were centres of an early pervasive central administration prior to the Folkung Period, although some if not all can be said to have been administrative centres in so far as they probably provided places to collect and store tribute, and enabled the king and his court or their representatives to stay there in an age when their periodic presence was necessary to maintain continued obeisance. The presence of royal estates was itself a representation of royal power to those who lived nearby, and it thereby maintained the king's authority. The *husabyar* of *Dalalagen* were relatively late creations, from a time when *husabymän* may have acquired functions additional to their original ones. The reasons why no *husaby* can be found in some older settlement areas might be because the evidence, in this case the place-name, has disappeared and not been recorded, but might also be because some other *kungsgård* fulfilled the same functions. As it is, records of some *husabyar* are fifteenth-century or later, and other sites now named Husaby or Husby do not appear at all in medieval sources, while it is also likely that other *kungsgårdar* that do fit Schück's pattern went unrecorded. There is an interesting contrast between Denmark's crown estates and the *husabyar* of Sweden, in that no Swedish *husaby* is known to have developed into a town.

To some extent the same may be said of the *bogårdar* and *husabyar* of Götaland as for the *husabyar* of Svealand, but there twelfth-century kings had other resources to draw on during their *iter*, especially their own lands, since all the royal dynasties of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had large estates in either Västergötland or Östergötland. Moreover, the resources of ecclesiastical landholdings certainly provided lodging and supplies. It has been emphasised that the Church was the main beneficiary of the diminution of crown land before the Folkung period. Leaving aside the religious and spiritual motivation behind this, it is probable that ecclesiastical centres,

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[88] This era is also favoured by the majority of modern scholars, for a variety of reasons (many of which are discussed above), including Wijkander, Thomas Lindkvist and Hellberg.

[89] See Rahmqvist 1996 p. 236, note 36.

especially monasteries, owed this service to the kings in return for their patronage and protection. Seen in this light, the donations of land from royal estates need not have represented a great loss to the king. It is difficult to ascertain how the monasteries of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries may have functioned in their capacity as royal foundations, but they probably provided similar lodging and victualling to that provided by the royal monasteries of eleventh and twelfth-century Germany did for the courts of their kings during their travels. This was certainly the case in Denmark, where Queen Sambiria (Margrete) is recorded as having visited the monastery of Kalvø with 1600 horsemen, who consumed so much of its resources that it never recovered.[90] Before the powerful castles of the Folkung period were built, the strong-rooms of Swedish monasteries may also have acted as the repositories of royal valuables, as they did in many other parts of Europe.[91] Cistercian activities as 'bankers' were regulated by the General Chapter, in order to prevent misuse of treasures entrusted to their safekeeping. Monasteries and their strong-rooms were not invulnerable to attack in times of war, but there are no records of their destruction or fortification in Sweden during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, and they were probably more secure than most *visthus*.

In the mid-twelfth century kings demanded the same services from Church lands as others. Rome made repeated attempts to prevent kings from demanding military service and taxes from them, one of which was the *gästning*. Petitions were almost invariably received favourably in Sweden, but their repetition suggests that kings were either unwilling or unable to carry out what they had promised, or that new kings ignored the agreements of their predecessors. It appears that a gradual reduction in demands on Church lands occurred, but there is no indication that monasteries refused to accept guests, let alone kings who gave them their land. Moreover, by the thirteenth century the *conversi* (lay brothers) of Cistercian foundations throughout Europe provided numerous services to the secular nobility, ranging from the witnessing of charters to acting as almoners, merchants

[90] SMHD 2, p. 208. It should be noted, however, particularly with reference to assertions that Margrete was responsible for the long-term decline of the monastery, that the records of Cistercian monasteries often blame women for their troubles.

[91] D.H. Williams 1998 pp. 154–56.

and builders.[92] The General Chapter attempted to restrict the use of *conversi* for secular purposes, but individual houses were often in no position to resist the demands of their benefactors. Similarly, despite the prohibition on allowing women into monasteries, those in positions of power were able to circumvent this.[93]

The early kings of Sweden were presented with different problems in governing Svealand and the part of Götaland that was not their homeland. The settled land of the Svealand *landskap* was divided between a large number of nobility. In contrast, Västergötland and Östergötland were dominated by a few powerful landowners, capable of hindering access even to *kungsgårdar*. Knut Eriksson's answer was to appoint one of the powerful nobles of Östergötland as his right hand man, the jarl, possibly Guttorm and then Birger Brosa, thereby controlling the region in which his power was weak by proxy. It was almost certainly for the same reason that Ulf Jarl made his accommodation with Birger Magnusson after the demise of Knut Långe.

[92] D.H. Williams 1998 p. 86.
[93] D.H. Williams 1998 pp. 131–32.

CHAPTER NINE

ROYAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE EARLY FOLKUNG PERIOD

9.1. *The extension of royal administration*

During the period 1250–1320 a number of substantial fortifications were built at royal instigation. They undoubtedly had a defensive function, both against external enemies and possible rebellions, but incidents recounted in *Erikskrönikan* and other sources, in which castles appear as kings' residences or prisons during the disputes within the Folkung family, provide evidence of another function, their use in the exercise of royal power. Whoever controlled the new fortifications could dominate surrounding regions, and for this reason castles functioned as royal administrative centres for the collection of taxes. It was not only the building of the new fortifications that entailed expense and effort, but the upkeep of both structures and men and animals. For this reason those who administered them had to be chosen with care. The construction of castles accompanied a change in the nature of administration, with the advent of a new administrative district, later called the *län* but referred to as *land* in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. In *Erikskrönikan* and diplomatic sources administrative districts are frequently named *fogderier*, the *fogde* their administrator.[1] These terms derive from Middle Low German *vogedie* and *voget*, and were latinised as *advocatia* and *advocatus* by the beginning of the fourteenth century, and *prefectura* and *prefectus* by the mid-fourteenth century.[2] Their early development must be reconstructed from assorted references in letters and chronicles, since late thirteenth-century sources do not include detailed accounts or land registers.[3]

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[1] The term *slottslän* is also anachronistic. Castles were usually referred to as *hus* or *borg* in the thirteenth century. To avoid confusion, I have followed Birgitta Fritz's example in referring to all the castle administrative districts as *fogderier*.

[2] For example, DS 1379 (1303), DS 1434 (1304), ST 1, 144 (1288) and 185 (1315).

[3] Those medieval sources which detail *län* divisions are both fifteenth-century,

The terminology used for *fogderier* and their administrators is not consistent. In 1281 Magnus Ladulås referred to Borgholm as 'our *slott*'.[4] When in 1288 he mentioned St Klara monastery as being in 'our *slott* Stockholm' he was clearly referring to an administrative region.[5] In other cases there appear to be references to the king's agents (*slottsfolk*). In 1303 Birger Magnusson referred to 'our *fogde*' in Tavastland.[6] There are references from the late thirteenth century to the *fogde* and *underfogde* in Stockholm and Kalmar collecting dues, giving rights to trade or fish in nearby areas, and even preventing the sale of a house in the town at the king's request. There is no clear statement that the *fogdar* of *Erikskrönikan* were identical to any of the king's men listed in the *landskapslagar*, but this must have been the case. These included *herrar, länsherrar, länsmän* or *länsinnehavarer*. The *länsmän*, often referred to as *kungens länsmän*,[7] were installed in every *hundare*, each of which was supervised by a *länsherre* or *länsinnehavare*, the two terms seemingly being interchangeable.[8] That the *länsherre* was a senior official is clear, since only he and the king could summon an extra *ting*.[9] The income from *ting* fines was divided among the king, the *hundare* and others concerned in Södermanland, but disposed of among those 'who hold the *län* above the *bönder*' by the *folkland herre* in Uppland.[10] Elsewhere in the same law code and in other circumstances, concerning failures to fulfil *ledung* obligations, fines were divided among those 'who hold the *län*', alongside those who administered the *hundare* and the *uppbordsman*.[11] In this case the first must be the *länsherrar*. Holmbäck and Wessén argued that the *herre*, clearly referred to in the *Manhelgdsbalk* as 'the one who rules

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Erik of Pomerania's *skattebok* (tax register, sometimes called *jordebok*), originally produced after Margrete's death in 1412, and reconstructed from seventeenth-century work on a sixteenth-century copy, and the 1497 *länsregister* made for King Hans. No accounts of the type kept during Gustav Vasa's reign exist for the Middle Ages, but there are surviving ones from 1360 for Nyköpings *län* and Dalarna, from Gotland in the 1480s, and two from the early sixteenth century. The most important single work on Swedish royal administration after 1250 is unarguably Birgitta Fritz's *Hus, län och land*.

[4] DS 736.
[5] DS 975.
[6] DS 1828.
[7] Andrae 1960 pp. 73–81.
[8] UL Kg 10:2, R 1.
[9] UL R 1, SdmL R 1.
[10] UL M 14.
[11] UL Kg 10:2.

over the folkland', must be the highest official of the three *folkland* of Uppland, but it is difficult to determine how, in this case, his position did not conflict with the *lagman's*. The Later *Västgötalagen* refers to a *land herre*, who was an appointed representative of the king, empowered to make decisions in his place; but this law code appeared fifty years later than *Upplandslagen* and in a different region.[12]

The regulations of the *landskapslagar* and the Alsnö statute concern the same people, the *frälse* who served the king, either as mounted warriors or as administrators. Fritz observed that the *länsinhavare* or *länsherre* must have been identical to the *fogdar*, referred to as holding castles and their administrative hinterlands, *fogderier*, in sources other than the *landskapslagar*. Apart from the king, they alone were entitled to summon a *hundares-* or *häradsting*, and received three *öre* in compensation if the *ting* failed to materialise. For offences concerning regular *ting* called by the *länsmän* a share of the fine was also taken.[13] In the *landskapslagar* a number of restrictions were placed on the rights of officials that harked back to the Alsnö statute. They could not let their horses wander on the land of the *bönder* and expect them to feed them, nor hold a *ting* for their own purposes unless they shouldered the cost. The Svealand laws refer to those concerned as '*herre* or *länsman*'.[14] The *herre* is also prohibited from demanding payment of *gengärd* in 'his län', suggesting that in this case he is the *länsherre*. Similar rules in the Later *Västgötalagen* refer to the '*länsman* or he who holds the *län*'.[15] In addition to these officials, increasingly frequent reference was made to the *hövitsman*. By the late fourteenth century the name was used for an assortment of folk who managed *borgar, kungsgårdar* or administrative districts on behalf of the king, and could therefore be synonymous with many of the above, but in sources from the late thirteenth century the *hövitsman* appears only as the holder of a castle.[16]

The names of *fogdar* are listed in sources from the late thirteenth century onwards, and all appear to be nobles or knights close to the king or great magnates, if not actual relatives like Magnus Bengtsson,

[12] VgL 2, K 4.
[13] Fritz 1972 pp. 76–77.
[14] UL Km 10, SdmL Km 13, VmL Km 13.
[15] VgL 2, Urbota mål 1:15.
[16] For instance, DS 975 (1288), which refers to Stockholm castle's *hövitsman*.

who might serve in an administrative or a military capacity.[17] The first named as *fogde* of Stockholm was Rod Keldorsson in 1289.[18] He had an *underfogde*, who must have fulfilled some of his functions when he was absent from the castle. In c. 1297 the *underfogde* was Ulf Spegel, in the period of Rod's likely successor, Saxe.[19] Whether the title *hövitsman* implied a difference in social rank from the *fogde* in 1300 is unclear; some *hövitsmän*, like those of Dalarna mentioned above, were appointed from among the *bönder* later in the fourteenth century, but this is hardly likely to have been the case with Gerhard Snakenborg, 'höwitsman' of Hästholm, Östergötland, from 1373–86, who administered the lands round the castle as a *pantlän*.[20] Like the western European term *castellan*, the title *hövitsman* seemingly had no connotation of social rank.

The combination of military and administrative functions in one person was not in itself anything new, as the immediate circle of any jarl in the Viking Period did the same, but administrative responsibility was now increasingly delegated and regulated. In Latin texts those employed in this way are listed as *domini, nobiles, majores* or *milites*. The lesser folk who resided in these castles were referred to as *borgare* (Latin *castrenses*), and included new types of military personnel such as *väpnare, skyttar, svenner* and *drängar*, who were paid with *beneficia* or *stipendia*.[21] How many of them there were in the late thirteenth century can only be guessed at. Figures from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may give a clue, however. In 1395 the Hanse towns sent 140 men to garrison Stockholm, in 1452 Axvall had a garrison of fifty, and Borgholm had a garrison of seventy at the end of that century.[22] These numbers correspond with those known from abroad in the late thirteenth century during times of war, but castles seem to have been virtually empty at other times, being garrisoned by the first force to arrive. In addition to the soldiers there would, of course, also be many servants and family members in a castle.

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[17] DD 2:6, p. 287. See Fritz 1972 p. 79.
[18] DS 989.
[19] DS 1191. Saxe is first named in DS 1179 (1296).
[20] Fritz 1972 p. 67. Both castles were in private hands.
[21] The Swedish term *väpnare* probably corresponds most closely to the Latin *armigeri*, listed and presumably contrasted with *milites* (*riddare*, knights) in the testament of Magnus Ladulås (DS 802, DS 1285) and several documents thereafter.
[22] Fritz 1972 p. 49, Herman Schück 1959 pp. 19–20.

Besides the new administrators, those who existed before the expansion of the king's power in the late thirteenth century, the *husabymän*, continued to function. The need for money referred to above probably meant that new methods of exploiting these resources were also employed. The lands owned by kings were exploited to their potential by them in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, in the form of the *husabyar*, after which their importance declined with the increase in other forms of administration.[23] In spite of the changes, it should be remembered that outlying regions were still difficult to govern directly. By Magnus Ladulås's reign Småland had become an important economic region, yet it was effectively governed by Magnus Bengtsson, based in Kalmar, on behalf of the king. In many ways he fulfilled the same role as Birger Brosa had for Knut Eriksson. After Swedish kings were established in Svealand Västergötland also became an outlying region in some respects, often the refuge of rebels and renegade kings.

It may be assumed that all the castles of the late thirteenth century were built in *kungsgårdar*. Many of the tasks carried out by the castle's garrison and administrators, such as collection of taxes, rents, and fines, and perhaps tolls, must have been carried out before the castle was built. Castles fulfilled the same functions, albeit often on a large scale, as a *visthus*. Sources show that the number of *fogderier* (*land*, later *län*) increased steadily from the late thirteenth century, their administrative areas having been built on those already in existence, often a whole *land* or *folkland*, but later groups of *hundare* or *härader*. Even after Magnus Eriksson's reign *län* boundaries rarely crossed those of the old *land*. The later *län* were created by dividing those already in existence, and a variety of places of economic importance adopted as their administrative centres, ranging from *kungsgårdar* to towns without castles, fisheries and mines. The decision on how these were divided must have been determined by complexes of *kungsgårdar* already in existence, possibly those already administered from a single *husaby* or other *kungsgård*, or areas which were economically linked. Given the use of existing boundaries, however, allowing for the exemptions granted to the new *frälse*, the king's administration was, in principle, extended as never before over the whole land.

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[23] Wijkander 1983 pp. 135–139.

The basis of the system which lasted well beyond the Middle Ages was therefore created in Magnus Ladulås's reign, but the land divisions of his period can only be surmised from fourteenth-century evidence, chiefly the agreements made between King Birger and his brothers in 1310 and 1314.[24] The later term for an administrative area, *län* ('pledge'), which replaced the old *sysle* in the few regions where that existed, reflects a change to a system more like that which was developing in western Europe, in which the king could dispose of land on a temporary basis in return for service.[25] The terms *fogderi* and *län* were evidently used both for land administered by a king's servant and that land enfeoffed by the king. Precisely how the king in Sweden enfeoffed land in the late thirteenth century is not clear. It is frequently impossible to determine what status *fogderier* had, particularly in the early Folkung Period. Throughout this period the number of royal castles was low. In 1310 Stockholm castle's *fogderi* comprised Attundland and Tiundaland, and that of Nyköping castle Södermanland. At this time Fjädrundaland was administered by Queen Hedwig, having been donated to her as a morning gift after her marriage in 1298, but it is likely to have belonged to Stockholm before this. A large part of western Västmanland was also granted as a morning gift, functioning as a *fogderi* centred on the *kungsgård* of Dåvo. A smaller region in the east of Västmanland belonged to King Birger in 1310. Although there was an early Folkung castle in Närke, at Örebro, there is no evidence that it had become the centre of a *fogderi* there. In 1310 royal land in Närke was enfeoffed. Royal estates in Hälsingland and Dalarna were presumably still administered as they had been before Magnus Ladulås's reign, possibly from *husabyar*, since they are not known as part of any *fogderi*, and the situation in Närke was probably similar in the late thirteenth century.

Stegeborg was the administrative centre of Östergötland, and Kalmar of a large area of Småland. Since Kind and Ydre are not named in either 1310 or 1315 they were either outside the system or possibly within Stegeborg's *fogderi*. The situation with regard to Väsgötaland is also unclear. Ericus Olai claimed that Lödöse *hus* was

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[24] DD 2:6 (1310 *riksdelningstrakt*).

[25] In recent years there has been considerable debate about whether western and central Europe were dominated by contractual ties of vassalage and fiefs before the rise of bureaucracy in the thirteenth century. See Reynolds 1994.

the centre of a dependent territory when it was granted as a fief to Denmark in 1278, but this remains uncertain.[26] Gälakvist is not known to have been such before it disappeared at the end of the thirteenth century, but Lödöse and Axvall, the latter named as 'Nyhus', arguably were named as centres of Västergötland, together with Värmland and Dal, in 1315. Presumably the region was divided between them in some way. In Finland Åbo (Turku) and Tavastehus (Hämeenlinna) were centres of *fogderier* in Varsinais-Suomi and Häme, together with Viborg in western Karelia, which had been founded only in 1295.

9.2. *The old and the new*

The character of 'sveariket' prior to the late twelfth century is extremely difficult to ascertain, but its kings appear to have been those who controlled trade through the existing ports and were capable of mounting successful military expeditions abroad. Society was stratified, but was essentially a chiefdom society. In the Viking Period kings depended on external plundering, tribute and trade to raise finance.[27] The opportunities for this declined in the eleventh century, which brought about the eventual shift from a military and tax system designed for external appropriation to one required for internal exploitation.

In *Östgötalagen* it appears that the *ledung* in the coastal regions could replace their service with a fiscal one. Taxes here varied in different areas and payment was made on a collective basis, by the *härad*, as in the Mälar region.[28] In Västergötland taxes mentioned in the laws were based on household payments of the *gengärd*, probably originally paid as maintenance for the king and his followers as they travelled their lands. Lindkvist argues that the presence of kings and the earlier establishment of the church infrastructure in the provinces of Västergötland and Östergötland led to a gradual transformation of 'external forms of appropriation' to internal taxes which were capable of creating surplus income for a nobility. Västergötland in particular was strongly influenced by Danish practice. By contrast,

[26] EOC 21, p. 85.
[27] P. Sawyer 1991a p. 29, Lindkvist 1988 pp. 34–37.
[28] ÖgL D 5.

the king's taxation in the Mälar region was based on replacement of a military duty, and the shift occurred relatively quickly. Such a rapid change might also account for the coherence of *Upplandslagen* by comparison with other *landsapslagar*, not to mention the armed rebellions.[29]

In the Folkung Period both administration and military system were in a state of transformation. The expeditions of Tyrgils Knutsson must still have required a *ledung* fleet, but used paid troops capable of staying in the field for long periods as well, similar to those employed by the king's *länsmän* in his castles.[30] During the reign of Magnus Ladulås the higher nobility allied itself to the king. After the Alsnö statute they became *frälse*, freed from tax in return for military service as mounted and armoured warriors. The development of a centralised administrative apparatus did not ensure a pliant nobility, but the *frälse* now acquired their status and privileges through fiscal and administrative service to the king in exchange for their position, administered land on his behalf and disposed of income raised for him. Administrative service also provided opportunities for advancement among lesser folk. Numerous fourteenth-century sources refer to German traders and soldiers entering Sweden and being granted privileges. Foreign influence is evident in culture as well as architecture and institutions, with the creation of a knightly class.

In the will of Magnus Ladulås (1285) eight mints belonging to the crown are listed as Uppsala, Västerås, Örebro, Nyköping, Söderköping, Skänninge, Skara and Jönköping.[31] There was also a mint at Visby. Although all these towns had a castle at some stage, none is recorded at Västerås, Uppsala or Örebro until late in the fourteenth century. Since it is probable that each castle was built as the centre of a *slottslän* (tax district), those mints that coincided with castles were probably located in them.[32] The number of coins and dies found

[29] Lindkvist 1988 p. 29.

[30] They may have been limited in number, and operating at any distance still presented a problem: hence the inability to hold Landskrona in 1348.

[31] DS 802.

[32] Written sources referring to issues of coinage are few, and evidence on early coinage is provided largely by the coins themselves. Prior to 1248 coins had been struck in Sigtuna during the reign of Olof Skötkonung (994–1022) and Anund Jakob (1022–50). From c. 1150 there was a mint at Lödöse, and more coins were struck at Sigtuna from c. 1185. Coinage had already appeared on Gotland in c. 1140. The Sigtuna coins were minted by the Archbishop of Uppsala, and there was also

from the period 1250–1300 greatly exceeds that of the previous half-century.[33] Östergötland also adopted the accounting system of Västergötland, presumably a result of the unifying influence of a single ruling dynasty. Symbols added to the main motif on the coins indicate some form of central control (different forms probably indicating different mints), and there seems to have been at least one recoinage. Coins bearing symbols are a well-known instrument of propaganda, and monetisation of the economy has obvious value for increased fiscal control, which went alongside changes in administration that enabled the employment of paid soldiers and administrators.

a mint for Jarl Ulf Fase (1231–48), probably in Uppsala. Accounting systems were different in Svealand, Västergötaland and Gotland. Östergötland used the Gotland system and its coinage. To judge from coin finds, Gotland was the only place where large numbers of coins were minted.

[33] Klackenberg 1998 pp. 193–94.

CHAPTER TEN

FORTIFICATIONS AND URBANISATION

10.1. *Introduction*

The construction of large buildings and monuments, involving the labour of large numbers of people, has long been recognised as a mark of social organisation. Even in chiefdom societies it is assumed that there was some central accumulation and redistribution of wealth. In Sweden prior to the Folkunga Period monuments such as the Romanesque churches that sprang up all over the country required the investment of the local community around them, the *socken*, or of a local magnate. The same has always been assumed of Sweden's Iron Age hillforts. The union of *götar* and *svear* under one king led some scholars to seek evidence of increasing state power in the twelfth century, particularly during the long reign of Knut Eriksson, a possible candidate for the construction of a chain of fortified coastal towers known as *kastaler*.

In fourteenth-century Swedish sources the words *kastell*, *borg*, *hus* and *fäste* may all refer to castles. For the purposes of this book the word castle is taken to refer to a structure with defensive features and at least one tower, with or without walls attached to it. Even within this definition a castle may have a wide variety of functions, many of them unrelated to warfare. The most obvious function is defensive: to enable the garrison, which usually served a member of the nobility, to withstand attacks by both internal and external enemies. Although some European castles are known to have offered refuge to the local population as well as their garrison and lords, no instance of this is known from medieval Sweden. Many medieval sieges resulted in a duel of endurance because of limited resources, both within the fortification and in the countryside round about; the issue was decided by who held out longest, besiegers or besieged, and starvation or disease often played as important a role as military force.

In the construction of castles in the High Middle Ages there was a heavy emphasis on defensive strength, an ability to withstand long

sieges, often with a comparatively small number of defenders. In this respect they differed from early imperial Roman forts and the circular ring-forts of late Viking-Age Denmark, which were primarily garrison sites, albeit defensible.[1] Castles did not merely have defensive military functions, but could also act as bases for offensive action, or supply depots for friendly forces. For both defensive and offensive purposes they were usually placed in strategic locations, whether to block approach routes into a given region, to act as jumping-off points for offensive action, or to dominate a town or territory. As such the castle was as much an instrument of internal control as a defence against invaders. Because of their strength they could also provide secure centres for local administration and perhaps for valuables, but in addition functioned as symbols of the power and status of their owners. Even the construction of moats, on the face of it clearly defensive features, could become a matter of fashion rather than serving any military purpose. Town walls might fulfil the same functions as those of castles; while substantial walls might be difficult to defend, even those of stone, they enabled the inhabitants to control entry and exit, and also functioned as a symbol of the town's stature.[2]

Castles were not the only substantial buildings that functioned as symbols of power, as medieval kings and nobles also made use of palaces. The heyday of the *palatium* as a regional administrative centre, centre for the king's itinerary and the preferred place for kings to meet with their most powerful subjects had been the Carolingian period, but by the high Middle Ages castles had taken over many of their former functions. Nevertheless, palaces continued to be built.[3]

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[1] The period of occupation for the Danish ring-forts was short, and they were arguably constructed during the reign of Harald Bluetooth specifically because of the threat of German invasion (a more likely reason than as preparation for invasions of England, as none are on the coast). The forts had four gates and artefacts found within them have been almost exclusively domestic. On this basis some have drawn the conclusion that they were not intended for warfare, but this is not necessarily valid, since garrisons were engaged in peaceful pursuits for most of their existence even in forts that were clearly intended for defence. See Roesdahl 1987 pp. 136–40.

[2] Such an argument has been advanced, for instance, as an important motive for the building of powerful stone walls round late imperial Roman cities, and the same no doubt applied to medieval cities. See, for instance, Millett 1990 pp. 137–42.

[3] See Renoux 2002 pp. 59–72, on the development of the *palatium* with reference to state-building in France, and also Schieffer 2002.

Some were fortified, but defensive strength was secondary to aesthetic considerations, whereas the reverse was true of castles proper. In many ways palaces were complementary to fortifications, as they had a less threatening aspect and could be used, for instance, when their owner wished to place less emphasis on his military power and more on his association with benevolence and beauty. For this reason palaces were often the favoured residences of bishops. In Sweden a number of important events took place in palaces, not least the meeting or meetings that led to the issue of Magnus Ladulås's Alsnö statute/s, and all the bishops constructed palaces to function as their administrative centres.

10.2. *Warfare and the construction of fortifications in medieval Sweden*

With the exception of Bastrup in northern Sjælland, prior to 1250 there was nothing in Scandinavia remotely comparable with the powerful fortifications of western Europe with their massive stone donjons and walls.[4] Such fortifications were expensive and time-consuming to build, and beyond the means of Scandinavian landowners, even of kings.[5] Palisades and ditches probably existed at many Scandinavian settlements, but substantial fortifications of turf and wood, with steep earthen ramparts, wooden palisades (often on a stone foundation) and fortified gateways and often towers as well did not, although they were not beyond the means of Scandinavian kings or jarls, and were constructed not only in Poland and Kievan Rus, where nascent states existed, but in Lithuania and Estonia.[6] In Scandinavia there were few strong fortifications of any sort between the Viking Age

[4] R.A. Olsen 1986 pp. 30–31.

[5] The prevalence of stone fortification in western Europe of the twelfth century should not in any case be overstated; even in England and France many fortifications were of earth and timber throughout this period. See, for instance, Higham and Barker 1992, and the conjectural reconstruction of Stafford castle depicted on pp. 289–90.

[6] Examples include Gniezno in Poland, Novgorod in Rus, Palanga and Zardé in Lithuania and Lõhavere and Varbola in Estionia. See Genys 1996 pp. 54–57, and Zabiela pp. 224–25, pp. 53–57 and 223–228; Selirand 1989 pp. 72–78; Taavitsainen 1994 pp. 138–43. The fortifications of Staraya Ladoga in Karelia were constructed of stone, probably in 1114, but within Kievan Rus stone walls remained an exception in this period, most fortifications being of wood: see Kirpicnikov and Nazarenko 1996 pp. 90–91.

and 1130.[7] With the present state of research, the last phase of widespread fort-construction in Sweden appears to have been in the Migration Period.[8]

It has often been argued that widespread construction of defensive structures in a given region reflects a high level of violent disorder or a threat of it, which frequently coincides with periods when central power is weak. This happened in medieval Sweden during the reign of Birger Magnusson (1290–1318) and the period c. 1363–95. Both were periods of internal war in which rival claimants for the throne battled for power, but they were also periods when royal power was incapable of preventing the building of fortifications by local landowners. In both cases many of the castles were subsequently destroyed, by the governments of Magnus Eriksson and Margrete I respectively, once rule was undisputed and order restored. The pattern is repeated in many other European kingdoms.[9] Extensive fortification building was sanctioned by rulers (who had sufficient resources) if there was a threat of external attack, as in the reign of Alfred of Wessex, or to control a potentially hostile populace, as in the reign of William I of England. As will be seen, external threat is one possible reason for the construction of twelfth-century stone fortifications in Denmark and Sweden.

For most of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries neither peaceful conditions nor strong central government existed in Sweden, and it might be expected that local nobles would have the same free rein as they did in later periods of weak government. Yet in this period there is a comparative lack of fortifications. The explanation probably relates to the nature of warfare in early medieval Scandinavia, where (as argued in Chapter 7:4) it was the custom to conduct raids or determine the issue in the open field. Despite this, construction of fortifications in Sweden did begin well before 1250. In line with other archaeological research, castle research in Sweden has shifted in emphasis during the last two decades from typology to study of

[7] In Danish Schleswig, for instance, fortifications were relatively rare, while ringforts and (in the twelfth-century) tower castles were widespread in southern Schleswig and Holstein: see Ericsson 1993 pp. 67–78.

[8] There is still much work to be done on the nature and functions of forts in the Iron Age and Viking Period: see Olausson 2000 pp. 127–28.

[9] For instance, in Denmark in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (before Margrete's reign), and in England during the disorder of Stephen's reign, after which Henry II also adopted a policy of removing many of them.

hinterland and the relationship between castles and state formation, the creation of towns, churches and parishes, and trading connections. In other words, functional aspects and the context in which the castles were constructed have received more emphasis. There was a near-hiatus in Swedish castle research during the period 1953–1980, following Tuulse's work of 1952, and no modern overall synthesis or overview of work was published until Lovén's work of 1996.[10]

In Sweden new defensive structures of the period 1150–1250 were often free-standing masonry towers, referred to as *kastaler*. The word *kastal* ultimately derives from the Latin *castellum*, and was used in its wider sense by Icelandic-Norwegian saga writers.[11] Heinrich of Livonia mentions that Meinhart, bishop of Riga (1186–1196), called for experts from Gotland to help build his castle at Daugemale and the *kastal*-like structure at Yxküll.[12] In Swedish historiography, however, the term *kastal* has come to mean free-standing fortified tower.[13] Unfortunately written evidence for castle building in Sweden is rare before the fourteenth century, and dating of the early Swedish *kastaler* is extremely difficult as many remain unexcavated and others have revealed no datable finds. As a consequence assessments of date have often been made on the basis of typology. Dating by this method must always be regarded as suspect, since so many typological datings made before the advent of scientific dating were subsequently proved to be hopelessly inaccurate. Such was the case with the work of Vilhelm la Cour, who concluded that most early Danish castles were built on royal initiative.[14] In fact some early methods of castle-construction survived into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,

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[10] Tuulse 1952, and Lovén 1996.

[11] The use of *kastal* to mean a tower probably derives from Gotland, where it was used for (unfortified) free-standing towers with Romanesque traits at a number of churches. Similar usage to that of Gotland occurred later in Finland, where *kastari* referred to a variety of structures that had no military purpose. See, for instance, Vilkuna 1976 pp. 192–96.

[12] HCL 1.6, p. 24. Dendrochronological tests date the *kastal* at Visby to 1155. See Kyhlberg 1991.

[13] The term *kastell*, on the other hand, used in medieval Sweden to refer to any fortification, was used by Tuulse to mean a curtain wall of rectangular plan: see Tuulse 1947.

[14] la Cour 1972 and la Cour and Stiesdahl 1957. Danish castles such as Eriksvolde, Lindshøy and Kærsgård, previously designated as 'double-motte' types and supposedly influenced by motte and bailey castles abroad, are now known to have been constructed in the fourteenth century.

when they were used alongside newer styles, in both Denmark and Sweden. Rikke Olsen has shown that in the chaotic period following the death of Valdemar II (1241), Danish fortifications of 'outdated' style were built by lesser nobility, who did not have the means to build massive structures such as Ålhom and Kalø.[15] Typology as a basis for dating is therefore misleading. Until recently, comparison between Scandinavian fortifications and those of western Europe was also assumed to be a sound basis for dating, the assumption behind this being that western Europe was where 'feudalism' first developed and therefore the region from which the strongest influence should have come. Many also assumed that the tradition of castle-building came to Sweden via Denmark, and some still do.[16]

The view of la Cour that castles built in the twelfth century were constructed on royal initiative as a defence against Slavonic raids has nevertheless survived, and this view has in turn influenced Swedish scholars seeking an origin for the *kastal*.[17] Alongside those that almost certainly were royal foundations—Vordingborg, Sprogø, Søborg and Nyberg—six other Danish castles are now known to have existed in the twelfth century, and other sites may have been fortified.[18] With the exception of Pedersborg, which is in the centre of Sjælland, they are all on or near coastlines and waterways. In Denmark, as in Sweden, the majority of nobles lived in unfortified houses throughout the twelfth century, so construction of these castles as status symbols seems unlikely. Moreover, three out of seven Sjælland sites that were probably fortified have links to the powerful Hvide family.[19] One of the others, Søby Volde, though not itself with any obvious connection to royalty, was constructed in a similar way to Refshale, which has given its name to a group of four royal foundations. All five of these are situated at the heads of promontories and protected by ramparts and moats, a style of fortification that resembles that of Slavonic regions rather than western or imperial models, and one not found in Sweden or Norway.

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[15] R.A. Olsen 1986 pp. 66–100.

[16] See, for instance, Svennevall 1996 pp. 186–201.

[17] Stiesdahl 1981, pp. 207–220.

[18] The six are Bastrup, Søborg, Borren, Søby Volde, Pedersborg and Tranekær. See Engberg 1993 pp. 51–59, pp. 55–58.

[19] See Kræmmer 1999. Engberg 1993 lists Bastrup as one of their fortifications, an identification based on its ownership by one 'Ebbe of Bastrup' (possibly Ebbe Skjalmsen), recorded in 1117. Members of this family also constructed fortifications at Copenhagen and Kalundborg, in cooperation with Valdemar I (reigned 1157–98).

Datings of the twelfth-century castles mentioned above were obtained from objects found in cultural layers or by dendrochronology. In Sweden evidence is even scarcer. Architectural features may give some indication of date, but often only within a period of several decades or more. As with all typological dating, when the age of buildings was assessed using this method by scholars such as Ödman and Tuulse, datings obtained through comparison with other buildings which had themselves been dated by building style frequently compounded errors. Use of certain building techniques such as the masonry fish-bone method noted by Lundberg as dating evidence is a highly suspect practice and gives only the vaguest indication of period.[20] Cistercian monks may have introduced the Greek foot (33 cm) in the early thirteenth century, and some commentators have concluded that measurements conforming to precise numbers of feet, as opposed to the variable Swedish *aln* in use before it (47–64 cm long), gives a thirteenth-century date, but this is also a dangerous supposition. Hallström and Broberg have both pointed out that the Norrland *kastaler*, Totra, Harmånger, Välsta and Fröland, are close to 20 × 20 Greek feet square in plan. However, some *kastaler* were built on top of existing or earlier structures.[21] Nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn from building technique. The presence of brick clearly indicates building work after this material was introduced, although this may apply to only part of a structure. Brick was introduced to Denmark in the 1150s, but did not appear in Sweden until a century later. However, it need not be the case that the absence of brick dates a structure to the period before this.

10.3. *The* kastaler *of the east coast: early evidence of royal castle construction?*

Since written references are rare, the identity of those who built the *kastaler* is difficult to determine, although clues to the origin of *kastaler* may be provided by location. Some are close to probable *kungsgårdar*, places named Husby or Tuna, others are near to places which

[20] E. Lundberg 1929 pp. 145–51. Even the 'lilylike' tombstone built in to the wall at Fellingsbro, a phenomenon restricted to Västergötland, can only be dated to the early thirteenth century.

[21] A. Broberg and Franke 2002, p. 13.

have been associated with kings or may have been assembly places for fleets because of their names.[22] Some are close to harbours named Kungshamn, Kungssund and Snäckhamn, which may be an indication that these were constructed as instruments of royal power, in these cases perhaps connected with the *ledung*. However, places where ships gathered need not have belonged to kings, and the origin and date of some of these place-names are difficult to establish: it cannot be assumed, for instance, that *tuna*-names necessarily indicated crown land in the twelfth century, or that there was any continuity between possible forts indicated by such names as *rinkeby* and later *kastaler* built nearby. Unless a castle is likely to have been on royal land, rather than near it, the evidence is of little value.

The coastal location of a number of towers led several scholars to suggest that an early royal defensive system was constructed in the twelfth century, since their purpose may have been to guard harbours or act as lookout towers. Olsson identified the round *kastaler* south of Norrland as defences against raids by Wends or Estonians constructed in the reign of Knut Eriksson (1167–95), influenced by similar developments in Denmark.[23] This was largely accepted until challenged by Hansson and Ödman.[24] There is no written evidence to back up Olsson's theory, it may be doubted that Knut Eriksson had the means to construct such a system of defences, and archaeological support for it is very limited. Seven round coastal *kastaler* have been identified in Sweden: Kalmar, Borgholm, Stockholm, Strömserum (Ålem, Småland), Stensö (Östra Husby, Östergötland), Kungsladugården (Nicolai, Södermanland), and Fållnäs (Sorunda, Södermanland).

No twelfth- or thirteenth-century written sources give evidence of these *kastaler*. One, Fållnäs, is known only from a map of 1767, and only the foundations survive of most of the others.[25] The exception, Stensö, has not yet been excavated. Of the six, only the site of the round tower at Kalmar, situated in the east corner of the later castle, has revealed a cultural layer below the *kastal* foundations, dated

[22] No clear association can be shown with other place-names that might indicate earlier forts, such as *rinkeby* or *smedby*. Eight of eighteen *kastaler* are near the first, and seven out of seventeen near the second, but many other *rinkeby-* and *smedby*-names exist.

[23] Olsson 1932 pp. 273–304.

[24] H. Hansson 1956 pp. 25–37; Ödman 1987 pp. 157–61.

[25] Lovén 1996 p. 440.

to c. 1200.[26] Neither this nor the towers of Borgholm and Stockholm were designed as part of the later castles that surrounded them.[27] Both Stockholm and Kalmar *kastaler* appear to have been among other buildings before the new castles were built.[28] The date of the Stockholm *kastal* has provoked much argument during the last hundred years, but recent research suggests that it was built early in the thirteenth century.[29] Like the round tower of Borgholm, it stood isolated in the thirteenth-century castle courtyard, but predated it.[30] Borgholm and Stensö both have curtain walls attached, but these are later in date. The remains of the tower at Kungsladugården lie three kilometres west of Nyköping, and have no associated structures. Some of the *kastaler* may have been built on the site of earlier wooden forts, but only at Strömserum are there traces of one.

Although all the *kastaler* are defensible and were built on the coast, their locations give no clear indication of a uniform purpose. Stockholm, Kalmar, Stensö and Fållnäs *kastaler* could have acted as watchtowers, and the first two perhaps as toll collection points, but none could prevent shipping from entering the bays or waterways on which they were situated. One possible purpose of Stensö and Fållnäs may have been to mark collection points for the *ledung* fleet, but hard evidence for this is lacking. Although Strömserum and Borgholm lie only fifteen kilometres apart on opposite shores, even signalling between them would have been difficult, so they appear not to be complementary. Borgholm may have been built as a successor to the re-used prehistoric fort of Eketorp. The existence of both forts and defensive features at several Öland churches suggest that conditions were unsettled there in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Since the Iron Age fort of Gråborg was also re-used by the Danes,

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[26] Lovén 1996 p. 73.

[27] Åkerlund 1977 p. 92. Olsson 1932 dated the Stockholm tower, known as Tre Kronor in the Vasa period, to the late twelfth century, but this is a guess based on architectural style and his assessment of the arrival period of influences from abroad. On the basis of progressive change in sea level Ödman estimated Tre Kronor as belonging to the middle or late thirteenth century, but this too is an uncertain method. See Olsson 1940–41 pp. 31–58, Ödman 1987 p. 73. See also Lovén 1996 pp. 87–88, 433–35, and Söderlund 2001 pp. 153–67 (pp. 160–61, 164).

[28] Söderlund 2001 p. 164.

[29] Söderlund 2001 p. 164.

[30] Borgholm is not recorded in written sources before the fourteenth century. See Rudolffsson 1990 pp. 12–18, Lovén 1996 pp. 76–77.

Sweden and Denmark may have battled for the island in this period.[31] This need not have been part of a major war, but perhaps it was part of a continuing frontier struggle of the type that characterised most medieval frontier regions, frequently incited by local nobles.

At various times during the Viking Period and Middle Ages the passages of waterways were obstructed by underwater barrages of wooden piles and occasionally stone blocks. Both archaeological and place-name evidence, notably *stäk-* and *stek-* names, exist for these, although the latter gives no clear indication of date and some of the barrages could possibly have been intended for fishing. Given their number, most of these obstructions must have been built by local people. Some have been dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as the piles in Fållnäs Bay (Bredstäket) and Rönö stäk in Östergötland, and Hamrånge fjärd in Gästrikland.[32] A stone river barrier was also built near Strömserum *kastal*, which was situated on an island and must have guarded Alsterån river, a conduit for iron ore exports in the twelfth century. The location of Kungsladugården was similar, but no trace of pileworks to block the mouth of the Kilaån has been found. Apart from possible local settlements, no twelfth- or early thirteenth-century site near either of these towers that would have been worth defending against raiders has been discovered.

Three of Sweden's coastal *kastaler* became part of royal castles in the late thirteenth century, and were therefore probably located on royal estates earlier, but either the others were built by lesser nobility or they fell into private hands, and none of their owners are known to have been descended from Knut Eriksson. This does not rule out royal foundation, as they may have subsequently lost their usefulness to the king, but the few available datings indicate that Stockholm and Kalmar towers were built after Knut Eriksson's reign, while there is nothing to suggest that all the coastal towers were built at one time or with one purpose. If any single family had a hand in building more than one of the *kastaler*, it was the *Folkungaätten*. In the fourteenth century land at Strömserum, Stensö, Kungsladugården and Fållnäs was owned by various descendants of Birger Brosa.

[31] Lovén 1996 p. 79.
[32] A. Broberg and Franke 2002 p. 6.

10.4. *Other pre-Folkung fortifications*

Although it hardly qualifies as a coastal tower, the tower of Svintuna, or Uttersberg (Krokeks *socken*, Östergötland), bears strong similarities to the coastal round towers. It has attracted attention because it lies on the *eriksgata* route from Uppland, prompting suggestions that it may have functioned as a safehouse for the king or his agents on their travels in the thirteenth century or even earlier. Possibly Uttersberg was the 'Berg' of a 1399 document, which mentions a mill and a number of other properties as part of the king's *treding*. While Uttersberg may have been part of the king's *treding*, this does not tell us how old it was. Apart from the round coastal towers mentioned above, several other towers later became part of larger castles. One such was the square tower in the north-east corner of Nyköping castle (see below), which was attached to the later curtain wall but may have been built before it, since brick was not used in its construction.

Three more towers of probable thirteenth-century (Romanesque) origin existed on the coast of Gästrikland and Hälsingland: Totra, Välsta and Frölland. Välsta and Frölland were both in Hälsingland and only two kilometres apart. Totra and Frölland seem to have been among other houses, possibly constituting *gårdar*. Välsta and Frölland (but not the towers) are not mentioned in written sources until the fourteenth century, and Totra not at all in medieval sources. All three towers were positioned on the coastal route northwards from Uppland, and this has led some to propose that they belonged to the crown. However, they were not close to known twelfth- or thirteenth-century *kungsgårdar*, nor any known harbour. Both the small size of the towers and the evidence of *Hälsingelagen*, which mentions the collection of taxes by expeditions from Uppland, suggest that they are more likely to have belonged to local nobility, some of whom may have been opposed to crown interference. A defensive tower of granite rubble also stood alone in the grounds of the late medieval Harmånger church, near the coast of Hälsingland, and possibly functioned as a refuge for local people in times of danger.

The castle of Näs retained its importance throughout the period, and was situated on the island of Visingsö in the middle of Lake Vättern, almost at the point where Västergötland, Östergötland and Småland meet. It appears in the Icelandic *Rimbegla*, written in the early thirteenth century, which refers to it as the strongest place in

the whole realm of Sweden, where the king kept all his valuables.[33] It is later mentioned in *Annales 1160–1336* as the place where Karl Sverkersson was killed in 1167, and Magnus Ladulås also died there in more peaceful circumstances in 1290.[34] It is likely that the whole castle was built at one time. Näs resembles some of the fortified manors of the later Middle Ages, more a fortified *palatium* than a castle, as its walls were not particularly strong, nor was its design especially sophisticated for defence. There were possibly early thirteenth-century fortifications at Lödöse, guarding Sweden's only exit port to the west,[35] and Gälakvist, Västergötland, but for these even tentative typological evidence is lacking.

During thirteenth-century ventures abroad several places that had earlier been fortified by the natives were re-used and re-fortified, included the ill-fated Leal (Lihula) on the Estonian coast. Less well documented are Liedon Vanhalinna (near Lieto, Varsinais-Suomi) and Borgå (Porvoo, Uusimaa) in Finland. The evidence that Vanhalinna (*Gamla hus*, 'Old fort') was a Swedish royal foundation is inconclusive, and Borgå was probably constructed as a Swedish fort in the period of unrest during the reign of Albrecht of Mecklenburg. More certain is a Swedish occupation (and construction) of the hillfort at Hakoinen in Häme.[36] The Finnish name derives from Swedish *haga*, usually denoting crown land, a place-name also found near Lieto. Precisely when this fort was constructed is not clear, however—it may have been at any stage between 1230 and 1260. Hakoinen is probably the fort that was built during an expedition to Tavastland (Häme), which occurred during the reign of Erik Eriksson, if *Erikskrönikan* can be believed.[37] Another fort that was almost certainly used by the Swedes is that of Vartiokylä near Helsinki.[38] This is on the edge of a region heavily settled by Swedish immigrants in the late thirteenth

[33] The castle is also probably that referred to in a papal letter (DS 361) as *castro Regis Suetie*.

[34] ASMÆ, *Annales 1160–1336* p. 265, and Ek p. 69.

[35] Ekre 1985 p. 206.

[36] Taavitsainen 1990 pp. 166–69. The fort on the present site of Hämeenlinna was constructed later than Hakoinen, in a location with better access to and from central Häme, although the occupation of these forts appears to overlap.

[37] Ek pp. 30–32. The expedition is often referred to as the 'Second Crusade' to Finland. No other source tells of it, and Ek does not call it a crusade, although its emphasis on the purpose of conversion and the chivalric nature of the enterprise have led to the adoption of the term. See Chapter 12.

[38] Heikkinen 2003 pp. 40–41.

century, though not close to any known settlements, and was in use in during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, as well as the late fourteenth century. Its defences resembled those of the interior (Häme and Savo), and many of these too remained in use during this period, presumably by the natives with the acquiescence of their new rulers. Throughout the Middle Ages the main threat to Swedish Finland, and before this to Häme, came from Novgorod, as is well documented in Novgorod's own chronicles.

What provided the impetus for the building of castles before 1250? There is no evidence that any of the fortifications listed above was an administrative centre, with the possible exception of Näs, if Henrik Schück's tentative theory that it was a *husaby* is accepted.[39] Three castles are listed by Fritz as royal before 1250, Alsnö, Visingsö-Näs and Lödöse.[40] Alsnö was a *palatium* rather than a fortification, and is known to have existed in 1200, when King Sverker mentioned it in a letter. If the early building was at all comparable to the building of the Folkung period (see below), the Alsnö of the early thirteenth century must have had a symbolic value as a representation of royal power and wealth. Although more defensible, Näs could have fulfilled the same function. *Kastaler* are less likely to have had such a function, but an element of this cannot be ruled out.

In Sweden neither Näs nor the three possibly royal *kastaler* constitute a concerted attempt to defend Swedish territory against external threat or to dominate local inhabitants. There is no comparison, for instance, with the motte and bailey castles of William I of England, since these were built by an alien aristocracy living among a hostile population.[41] Such a view would have validity only if the castles represent an extension of royal power in rebellious areas associated with the *folkungar*, or connected with the institution of new methods of taxation. In Finland Hakoinen will have been a confirmation of a Swedish presence in Häme, and could have been used a centre for tax collection, but it may be doubted whether this was systematic

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[39] See Chapter 7, p. 172.

[40] Fritz 1973 p. 29, Thordemann 1920.

[41] Svennewall interprets *kastal* building as a sign of conflict in the period 1150–1250, between the house of Sverker, the house of Erik, the family of Bjälbo, and the *folkunga* lords of Uppland. However, his assertion that it is clear that the *kastaler* were built by the same person is not supported, even by his own 'evidence': Svennevall 1996 p. 187.

until the fourteenth century. Taavitsainen suggests that the construction of the fort at Hämeenlinna, which had better communications with the settled region of Häme but worse communications with the coast, did not occur until Swedish rule was felt to be firmly established.[42]

Castle construction by kings or their agents before the Folkung Period seems to have been very limited in scale. Most of the early *kastaler* were strong but had limited interior space. They may have been watchtowers or, in a few cases, have provided defence against raids, but might equally have functioned as bases, or defences of last resort, for the armed retinues of local aristocracy. Without a surrounding palisade or wall (which some had) they were unsuited to the maintaining of garrisons of any size, and clearly provided no shelter for horses. In an unstable period, some masonry *kastaler* may have functioned as safehouses for the king or his agents on their travels, but this is mere hypothesis, and their number and size were arguably inadequate.

The case of the small and relatively insubstantial Norrland towers emphasises that until recently scholars were preoccupied with a search for evidence of royal castle construction. Behind this lay an unwritten assumption that only a strong central authority had the resources to build stone towers; hence Olsson's concentration on the reign of Knut Eriksson, perceived to have been a powerful king because of his long reign. If this were the case, there would have been no brochs in Iron Age Scotland or round towers in early medieval Ireland, or Swedish and Finnish hillforts with defensive walls, which required at least an equal input of manpower.[43] These examples also demonstrate that similarity in style is no clue to central initiative, any more than difference in style is an indication that there was none. The coastal *kastaler* of Sweden were all round and lacked ground floor doorways, but otherwise varied in size. Contemporary written evidence for the building of fortifications by local nobility in Sweden before the Folkung Period is non-existent, but it almost certainly occurred. There are many defended sites of uncertain date in Sweden, some of which were probably no more than moated hills with palisades.

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[42] Taavitsainen 1990 p. 172.

[43] The main period of hillfort construction in Sweden was from c. 400–550, the Migration Period, whereas in Finland it was the late Viking and Crusade Periods, c. 1050–1300.

The building of *kastaler* in Sweden is often seen to have developed as a result of Danish influence. Certainly there were dynastic links with Denmark, but there is no particular reason why Danish brides such as Christine Hvide, queen of Karl Sverkersson, would have brought castle-building and its techniques with them. Rather, in both countries, castle construction was more widespread when royal control was weak. The towers of Gotland, where many church towers were clearly built with a defensive function in mind, might equally have been the immediate precursors of those on the mainland of Sweden. The building of fortifications in Sweden during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, rather than marking any attempt at control by the kings, demonstrates that local nobility with sufficient means could construct them without much hindrance. There is insufficient evidence to judge whether this was easier for those who had a close association with kings, as many members of the *Folkungaätten* had.

The construction of defensible churches and church towers (often referred to as church *kastaler*) required at least as many resources as the coastal *kastaler*. There is some disagreement over what constitutes a defensible structure, but no-one disputes that some churches were built with this in mind. The majority of Romanesque churches of this type were built on Öland or the Möre coast (Småland), but there were others on the Mälar waterway and in Östergötland. Anglert has suggested that Birger Brosa and his descendants were responsible for the proliferation of fortifications in the Kalmarsund region. This conforms to other evidence of *Folkungaätten* landholdings on or near the Småland coast, which was apparently colonised by people from Östergötland during the twelfth century.[44] These churches probably had multiple functions: as religious and social centres, as places for the storage of valuables, as symbols of the power of those who built and owned them and as defensible refuges for the local community in times of danger. In this region Danish and Swedish interests clashed, and it was the part of Sweden closest to the coasts and islands of the southern Baltic and Estonia, the homes of sea raiders.[45]

[44] Anglert 1993 pp. 166–170.

[45] Tuulse 1947 also interpreted the defensible churches of Norrland as responses

10.5. *The Folkung Period*

In the period between Birger Jarl's victory over the *folkungar* rebels and the death of his son Magnus Ladulås a number of new and more powerful fortifications were built. Three were constructed around *kastaler*, but most were more closely associated with towns or trading places than the earlier towers. These were at Stockholm, Nyköping, Lödöse, Jönköping, Axvall, Kalmar, Borgholm and Stegeborg.

The author of *Erikskrönikan* claimed that Birger Jarl, 'den wise man', founded the city of Stockholm with the deliberate intention of preventing enemy access to inland Svealand via Mälaren.[46] If the foundation had a defensive function a fortification would have been necessary, but the castle, 'castrum nostrum Stokholm', and its *hövitsman* are not mentioned until 1288. The outline of the medieval castle was reconstructed by Martin Olsson, consisting of a large outer bailey, nearest the shore, and a smaller inner bailey around the *kastal*. This has not been questioned, but many of Olsson's other conclusions and datings were disputed by Ödman, whose own findings have since been re-examined.[47] The probable purpose of the fortification, as of the earlier *kastal*, was control of water traffic, numerous jetties testifying to the volume of shipping. Ödman dated the castle to the late thirteenth century, based partly on a re-examination of the earliest excavated material. Recently Lovén has pointed out that no cultural layer was uncontaminated and that this material ought to be later than the outer bailey, although he still assigned the building of this to the third quarter of the thirteenth century, but Kerstin Söderlund has questioned even this, and indicated that the outer fortifications were probably constructed in the fourteenth century.[48] There can be no doubt that there was activity around Stockholm

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to Karelian raids, but the evidence for such raids is virtually non-existent. *Ek*'s statement that Karelians burnt Sigtuna is most likely an error, a guess that the pagans who burnt Sigtuna were the 'pagan' enemies of the author's own period. See Tuulse 1947 pp. 7–38 (p. 31).

[46] Ek p. 44.

[47] Olsson 1940 pp. 31–58. There are problems with the cultural layers identified by Olsson, and the oldest layer under the north-west wall was poorly researched. Only the old north-west fortification wall and the greater part of the north-eastern wall under the new palace are well documented. Although many of Olsson's conclusions have been disputed, his documentation of finds is still valuable.

[48] Reconstructions of the original castle appear in Olsson 1940 pp. 31–58, and Lovén 1996 pp. 87–89. See also Söderlund 2001 pp. 164–66.

before Birger Magnusson became Jarl, and it does seem likely that work on the main castle, built around the *kastal*, began in his period. It could have been defensible before his death in 1266. It has been suggested that the time of its foundation might have been after the rebellion of 1247–8, and that it may have provided some provocation for the 1251 rebellion.[49] As well as being placed to control water traffic, it is on the boundary between Uppland and Södermanland. The importance of this is not necessarily negated because Södermalm and Norrmalm were settlements in their own right by 1300.[50]

Birger Jarl may also have begun work on the castle at Nyköping. According to *Erikskrönikan*, Magnus Birgersson (later King Magnus Ladulås) obtained 'nyköpungs hwss' as part of his *jarladöme* in 1266.[51] It became the prison of Valdemar Birgersson in 1288, and was destroyed in the rebellion that followed King Birger's murder of his brothers in 1318.[52] Birger Jarl obtained the land from Gudhem nunnery as part of an exchange in 1253, probably with the purpose of building the castle, after it had been donated to the nuns by Queen Katarina in 1250.[53] No standing remains exist, but its outline is known. The oldest parts of the medieval town, which lay close by, have been dated to the twelfth century. The castle was built in such a position that it could prevent enemy attack by blocking access to the town and levy tolls on any incoming ships.

Most of the other castles that appeared in the late thirteenth century were probably built during the reign of Magnus Ladulås. The town of Borgholm first appears in written sources in 1285, although a charter to raise taxes that appears to refer to it dates from 1281, but the structure of the castle at this date is uncertain.[54] No castle is mentioned until 1308, but it may have been built earlier.[55] By the mid-fourteenth century it was built around the older *kastal* on a square plan with four corner towers. Only one royal castle is known to have been built in Östergötland during the thirteenth century. This was Stegeborg, on an earlier trading site on a large island in

[49] Ödman 1987 pp. 148–50, Dahlbäck 1983 p. 58.
[50] As argued by Beskow and Staats 1984 pp. 80–81.
[51] Ek p. 45.
[52] Ek pp. 71, 171.
[53] DS 405 and DS 377.
[54] DS 736.
[55] DS 815 and DS 1577.

the estuary of the bay of Slätbaken. It is first named in the treaty between the warring Magnusson brothers in 1307, but is probably the castle of *Magnúss saga* mentioned in connection with Valdemar.[56] Although the island guarded the approaches to Söderköping, which began to grow in the mid-twelfth century, the castle was not on its highest point and was more symbolic of royal power than an effective defence.[57] It was probably no more than a square tower, part of which was later incorporated in a new castle in the late fourteenth century.[58]

A new castle at Lödöse appears in a relatively early written source, when given as pledge to the Danish king by Magnus Birgersson.[59] The new castle was built in the 1270s, and was pulled down in 1473.[60] There are limited remains of this castle, which was situated in the middle of the old town. It is uncertain whether this was built around an earlier *kastal*, which may have had walls added in the years around 1250. Also in Västergötland, Årnäs or Aranäs may have been a royal foundation. It was owned by Tyrgils Knutsson in 1304,[61] but he may have earlier acquired it from the king.[62] Årnäs is not named in any source until the early fourteenth century, and the date of its construction is unknown. It has been suggested that it was founded before 1250.[63] Since the earliest finds date to the late thirteenth century, however, the tower was probably built between 1250 and 1290.

A fortification at Gälakvist, of uncertain date was abandoned around the turn of the fourteenth century, possibly because of the appearance of a new fortification at Axvall, named as such in several annals and documents.[64] No event at the castle is recorded as having occurred before 1288, but *Erikskrönikan's* account of the 1277 war between Magnus and Valdemar Birgersson, the latter assisted by Erik Glipping of Denmark, indicates that a castle existed then.[65] Alternative possibilities are nearby Trågenborg and Bjurbackarna,

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[56] ST 164.
[57] H. Andersson 1990 pp. 47–50.
[58] Lovén 1996 p. 81, citing a conversation with Gunilla Malm.
[59] ST 1:31.
[60] Fritz 1973 p. 61.
[61] Ek p. 95.
[62] Lovén 1986 p. 277.
[63] Lovén 1986 pp. 275–76.
[64] For instance, DS 2032 (1315), . . . *novum castrum in Asawaldh.*
[65] Vita Sancti Brynolphi 1998. The *Vita* mentions a meeting at Axvall in 1288:

where the sites of probable wooden castles have been identified. Their periods of occupation are uncertain, and either or both may have been outlying fortifications of Axvall, or alternatively its predecessor instead of Gälakvist.[66] Axvall was possibly built on older royal land, that of the *gård* Ökull, the centre of one of Västergötland's *boen*, part of Uppsala öd.[67] Ökull lies one kilometre to the south-east of Axvall, though a *socken* boundary runs between them. The main castle of Axvall may have replaced Gälakvist because it was better placed for royal control of communication routes, whereas Gälakvist had been built to control Skara's trade. Alternatively, one or more of the above fortifications might have belonged to the Bishops of Skara.

Another problematical castle is that of Jönköping, first mentioned as 'castrum junakøpung', the place of issue of a document in 1278.[68] No mention of a castle here occurs after 1309, which implies that it had disappeared before the partition of the kingdom between King Birger and his brothers in 1310. *Erikskrönikan* mentions a wooden castle built by the Danes, which was burnt down by Hertig Erik in 1309, probably the same one referred to earlier as built by King Birger (to whom the Danes were allied) in the same year. There is no reason to doubt that a castle existed at Jönköping, which was in a strategic position between Vättern and the sea and lay on the main route from Danish possessions northwards into Småland, but its site is uncertain. The town grew up after 1250 but a market centre may have existed before this.

In addition there are a number of other places that may be sites of thirteenth-century castles. In 1276 Magnus Ladulås sent two letters

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Fritz did not accept this as correct, but in view of the other evidence given by Lovén it may be. See Fritz 1973 p. 63 and Hermann Schück 1963 p.179, Lovén 1996 p. 67. For Erik Glipping's siege, see Ek p. 58. The chronicle tells us that Erik was spoiling for battle, or at least to cause more devastation. Sadly for him his plans were interrupted by an untimely outbreak of peace between Valdemar and Magnus. It is more likely that Erik and Magnus decided to make peace, since Valdemar gained nothing by this.

[66] Lovén 1996 p. 69.

[67] B. Sawyer 1986 pp. 327–28.

[68] DS 654. Whether this was the same castle as one in Sanda, possibly the *socken* just to the east of Jönköping and where Magnus also issued a letter in 1281, is uncertain, but Sanda appears to be in another location than the *junaköpung* of the 1278 letter, in which Sanda (but no castle) is mentioned. This would mean that a castle was built there between 1278 and 1281, presumably as replacement for the other Jönköping castle, and subsequently vanished.

from 'the island of Norrbyås', and the same place was the source of a 1299 letter issued by a group of nobles, none of whom is known to have owned any *gård* in the area.[69] Lovén states that the island in question is undoubtedly Öby kulle, a high stony island in the sound south of Norrbyås church in Närke. The place was once called 'slottsholm' and what was believed to be the remains of a defensible building were still there in the nineteenth century. Insufficient remains to make any judgement on its date, size or precise nature, but its location on an island on the waterway route from Svealand to Västergötland makes it a possible short-lived royal foundation of the thirteenth century.[70] There is a strong possibility that other royal fortifications, if not those of greatest importance, remain undocumented or even undiscovered. For instance, excavations suggest that there was also a castle at Östra Åros, under the present site of the cathedral, but this is not mentioned in a single source. It may well have been a construction of Magnus Ladulås's period.[71] Rahmqvist also suggested that the ruined castle of Sille (Västerljung, Trosa) might have been a royal stronghold, given its strategic position, and could have been constructed in the 1250s or 60s.[72] Two more castles, Dalaborg (in Dal) and Ringstadaholm (Östergötland), are known to have existed shortly after 1300, when King Birger was intermittently at war with his brothers, and may have been founded as early as the reign of Magnus Ladulås.[73]

Several stone fortifications in Finland may have been founded in the early Folkung period. Drake believes that the first fortification at Åbo was constructed in the 1250s or 1260s, and that the original castle of Hämeenlinna was founded c. 1290. Neither is mentioned in written sources until after 1290, and it is uncertain whether the first mention of Hämeenlinna (Tavasthus) in 1308 refers to this castle or Hakoinen, fifteen kilometres to the south. Drake made his datings on the basis of similarity to other fortifications, at Visby and Stockholm. This is a very unsound dating method, and the best that

[69] DS 609, DS 586. The place is called *nerboahs* in these, and *nærboø* in the 1299 document.
[70] Lovén 1996 p. 82.
[71] Fritz 1972 p. 46.
[72] Jospehson and Mogren [eds] 1996 p. 231 (quotation).
[73] Ek p. 104, and Fritz 1973 p. 81. They are recorded in 1304 and a regest of a document of 1312–14.

can be said is that work on Åbo may have begun at any time between c. 1260 and 1320, and in Hämeenlinna between c. 1280 to 1320, given the existence of Hakoinen.

For Sweden's kings the castles of the Folkung Period undoubtedly symbolised their power in a way that had not occurred earlier. They were not, however, the only constructions to do this. The sites of some important recorded meetings were not castles, but unfortified palaces, Alsnö, Vadstena and Lena. Only their foundations remain, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that expense was lavished on them. Undoubtedly large halls used as meeting places existed before 1250, as successors to those of the Viking Period. Many may have been made of wood, such as the hall for which there is some evidence at Alsnö. It is nevertheless in the period after Valdemar's accession that there is clear evidence of continental influence in building style and ornamentation.

Kings were not alone in building fortifications in the late thirteenth century—to this period also belong the first documented as privately owned. One such was Ymseborg, on an important communication route in Västergötland. This was confiscated from Johan and Birger Filipsson, according to *Erikskrönikan*, and is documented in 1281 and 1282, after which it disappears from history.[74] Other castles that were listed in various sources as having been in private hands, and that were probably built in this period, were Gröneberg, Göksholm on an island in the lake of Landsjö, and Gum in Västergötland.[75] None of these fortifications was substantial.[76] One fortification of the secular nobility that has been extensively researched is the tower at Saxholmen (Ölme district). It is probably thirteenth-century, since a coin minted in 1210–1270 was found there. Eva Svensson suggests that it belonged to the Boberg family of south-eastern Sweden (Småland and Österland). Lars Boberg was in possession of large estates in this region in the late thirteenth century, and was a counsellor of the king.[77] Finds clearly show that Saxholm

[74] Ek pp. 63–64, DS 717 and DS 744.

[75] EOC 17, p. 76. In the seventeenth century several other sites were linked with Joar Blå, including Edeby (in Aspö in Södermanland) and Näbborg (Vårfrukyrka, Enköping): see Lovén 1996 pp. 389–90.

[76] Lovén 1996 p. 282. He bases his conclusions on I. Anderson 1965.

[77] DS 1153 and 1212.

was a household and craft production centre as well as castle, a reflection of the noble family-based power structure in the thirteenth century in an area with no large towns.[78] Saxholmen gives an indication that by the late thirteenth century the service of the king may have become the surest, and almost certainly the safest, route to power and wealth for those nobles who had begun to adopt the cultural *mores* and lifestyle of their European counterparts.

Of more substantial size, if not stronger, were the fortified residences of the realm's bishops, second only to the king and *hertigar* in the late thirteenth-century *landskapslagar* and the regulations of the Skänninge statute. All the diocesan seats had substantial defensible bishops' residences by 1300: Husaby near Skara, which later became the centre of a larger fortified *gård*, Linköping, and Tynnelsö on Lake Mälaren, which belonged to the Bishop of Strängnäs.[79] Other sites where there may have been defensible buildings belonging to bishops before 1290 are Axvall and Säckestad in Västergötland, Bro in Östergötland, Vembo in Växjö diocese (Småland) and Uppsala in Uppland.[80] The Romanesque church at Munsö, Uppland, which was a bishop's *gård* in the late twelfth century, may also have been defensible. From Västerås diocese (Västmanland and part of Dalarna) no fortified episcopal residences of this period are known. Defensible episcopal and secular noble residences were not common in the late thirteenth century, but those that existed marked the beginning of a trend. During the fourteenth century they proliferated, and represented both a symptom and a cause of the increasing divide between upper nobility and *bönder*. None ever compared with royal fortifications in size or strength, although they were defensible in times of popular unrest, but they must have functioned as symbols of status and wealth.

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[78] Svensson 1996 p. 216.

[79] The first two are both mentioned in letters from 1278: see DS 655 and DS 74. See also Ekre 1985 p. 221, Lovén 1996 pp. 245–46. Tynnelsö first appears in DS 747 (1282).

[80] Lovén 1996 pp. 241–246, 260–61. Bro is first mentioned as the Linköping bishop's possession in DS 562 (1272), but three years earlier the *mansionem* and its *gård* belonged to Bengt Magnusson (not the Bengt Magnusson of the *Folkungaättens* 'lagmansgren', but another married to his sister, Ulfhild Magnusdotter), who donated it to Vreta monastery (DS 541).

10.6. *The consequences of royal fortification building for warfare and administration*

The *Erikskrönikan* account of Erik Glipping's siege of Axvall illustrates a change in the nature of warfare in medieval Sweden. A persistent feature of warfare throughout the Middle Ages was the conduct of destructive forays, often covering considerable distances, designed to weaken an opponent by ruining his land, destroying food resources and undermining morale. In regions without many fortifications this was also the main method of provoking an opponent to give battle should this be desired. In regions dominated by powerful fortifications, which could be reduced only with extreme difficulty using the siege technology of the day, such as west and central Europe in the Middle Ages or the eighteenth century, the seizure or holding of such strongholds tended to govern strategy.[81] Besieging an opponent's fortification was another method of provoking battle, and the *Erikskrönikan* version of events suggests that this was Erik Glipping's purpose in 1278. The appearance of stronger and more widespread fortifications necessarily entailed a change in the nature of warfare in Sweden. Their construction paralleled the introduction of heavily armed mounted troops as the elite of Scandinavian armies. While this was arguably the result of cultural influence from abroad, the use of royal fortifications as centres for administration, collection points for taxes, supply depots and mints, not to mention defensible residences in times of danger, meant that they acquired a special strategic importance and required permanent garrisons. This in turn required additional finance and reduced the importance of traditional methods of raising armies and fleets. Perhaps most importantly, the new royal castles of the late thirteenth century made a great contribution to the growth of urban centres in Sweden.

10.7. *The growth of towns in Sweden*

As they did in the Greek and Roman eras, many towns in the Middle Ages grew organically, but others were planned settlements. Like much of central and eastern Europe, Scandinavia had no urban

[81] See, for instance, Bradbury 1992 pp. 71–72.

centres before the Middle Ages. Early medieval towns in Scandinavia were places for the exchange of goods, rather than manufacturing centres, existing in the vicinity of fortifications, centres of religious significance or places propitious for trade in their own right. From the eleventh century onwards ecclesiastical and aristocratic centres created markets through demand, and, in the case of the monasteries, supply, since they produced a surplus from their own land. Important ports or market-trading centres could also become centres of activity, which might create a population with some disposable wealth.

In Sweden trade and craft centres had existed in the Mälar region during the Viking Period, at Helgö and Birka. An indication that the existence of the latter may have been due in part to planning is the existence of a royal representative, called a *prefectus* by Rimbert. Neither survived into the twelfth century, and few would call either a town. Scholars have not always agreed on what constitutes a town. A concentration of population within a small area is a prerequisite, but the creation of a new social environment is also implicit, which in turn stimulates economic and cultural change. A town may be considered a regional-administrative centre, but also a centre for trade and crafts. The inhabitants of medieval towns began to consider themselves a distinct social group with specialist skills, ultimately to be recognised in the form of privileges granted by kings, although this did not happen in Sweden until the very end of our period. According to Andersson, around 1250 there were eleven towns in Sweden.[82] Linköping, Old Lödöse, Sigtuna, Skara and Visby were long established, while Enköping, Skänninge, Kalmar, Söderköping, Uppsala and Västerås had only recently been created. Between 1250 and 1320 Arboga, Gamleby (or Västervik), Hästholmen, Jönköping, Nyköping, Skövde, Stockholm, Strängnäs, Torshälla, Åbo and Örebro developed into urban centres. The respective parts that trade, kings and the church played in this development are still under discussion.

The view that trade was the key factor in the development of Swedish towns was long prevalent in Swedish research, but this was challenged by the view that the expansion of royal and ecclesiastical power created the conditions in which towns were able to grow

[82] H. Andersson 1990, p. 1.

and survive. The Florence manuscript of c. 1120 defined places with *civitates* as episcopal centres, listing 'Scara, Liunga Kaupinga (Linköping), Tuna (Eskilstuna), Strigin (Strängnäs), Sigtuna, Arosa (Västerås)'.[83] Many urban centres whose development was stimulated by an ecclesiastical presence were either on or very close to probable pagan cult sites or *ting* sites, such as Linköping, which derives its name from Lionga (*ting*), Jönköping near Junabäck, and Växjö in Tiohärad, which was near Hov and Tilithyrby, where the *ting* usually met in the later medieval period.[84] The beginning of the expansion of some towns, such as Uppsala, Västerås and Tälje (now Södertälje), may be attributable almost wholly to the presence of the Church. The urban centre of Östra Aros that grew up after 1200 on the east side of Fyrisån as a result of the archbishop's presence at Gamla Uppsala displaced the old centre altogether after 1274, when the old cathedral burnt down and the decision was taken to construct the new one on the opposite side of the river. By the end of the thirteenth century it also had three other churches, a Franciscan convent and a *helgeandeshus*, as well as a thriving community of trades- and craftspeople. Although one of the earliest named *land*, Västmanland had not the same importance to the kingdom as the other regions of Svealand or Götaland, nor did it achieve this status until the fourteenth century, with the development of Bergslagen in Dalarna. Nevertheless, the Church wished to convert people in every region, and so it had acquired a place with *civitas* by 1120, Västerås, situated where the boundaries of three *hundare* met. Apart from its acquisition of a Dominican convent in 1244, little is known of the town until it is listed among the royal mints in 1285, and the first townsfolk are mentioned in 1291. Both king and *borgare* must have been drawn to it because it was an ecclesiastical centre. As in the case of Tälje, Uppsala and Västerås owed an indirect debt to kings, who provided the impetus for the founding of ecclesiastical establishments, but there is no indication that kings made any special effort to stimulate their growth.

Both Uppland and Västmanland had several lesser centres in the thirteenth century. Sigtuna probably owed its early expansion, such

[83] Kraft 1975 p. 115.
[84] L.-O. Larsson 1979 p. 197.

as it was, to both trade and Church, and Enköping to trade.[85] Enköping acquired a Franciscan convent in 1250 and also a hospital before 1279. The single but insubstantial urban centre of northern Uppland in the later thirteenth century was Östhammar, a trade centre that had replaced an earlier Viking Period settlement at the mouth of the Ed as a result of changes in the shoreline.[86] None of the towns of Västmanland grew to any substantial size in the Middle Ages, and, although known of in the thirteenth century, Köping and Arboga were even smaller than Västerås. Köping probably grew up as a trade centre, and even less is known of Arboga's origins, although the Franciscans chose to found a convent there in the 1280s.[87]

Many towns had developed in the agriculturally rich regions of northern Östergötland and Södermanland before the early thirteenth century, without the assistance of either Church or state.[88] Although both had interests in Norrköping, the settlement was primarily a market and fishing centre.[89] The circumstances of Skänninge were similar, where a centre for redistribution of surplus agricultural produce later attracted an ecclesiastical presence. Archaeological research has shown that Skänninge was already a centre for trade by the end of the Viking Period, although the establishment of two monastic houses and a hospital in the thirteenth century stimulated its development further.[90] Söderköping almost certainly owed its origins to its central position on communications routes, but was undoubtedly stimulated further by the presence of a large church (St Laurentius), a Franciscan convent, established in 1235, and a *helgeandeshus*.[91] It is also listed among royal mints in the testament of Magnus Ladulås. Another town that grew up on a communication route, in this case the main medieval route from Östergötland through Rekärne and between Mälaren and Hjälmaren, was Torshälla, north of Eskilstuna.[92]

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[85] Sigtuna may have been founded originally as a *kungsgård* by Olof Skötkonung, but grew up again after its destruction in 1187.

[86] S. Söderberg 1985 pp. 8–44.

[87] Västerås was called 'western' in comparison to Östra Aros (Uppsala), the second part of both names meaning rivermouth.

[88] See, for instance, Lindeblad and Nielsen 2000 pp. 153–73.

[89] B. Broberg 1984 pp. 5–8.

[90] See Hasselmo 1987 p. 239. Skänninge is first named in a written source, a Papal letter (DS 75), in 1178, as *Skeningia*. Its hospital may have been the first in Sweden, as it was founded before 1208.

[91] Tesch 1987 pp. 23–36.

[92] Järpe and Lidén 1982.

Like Södertälje, this was also the site of a number of mills. How the nearby Tuna came to be called Eskilstuna, presumably in honour of the legendary local saint, is unknown. It is not named thus in the Florence document, although listed as a bishopric, and the nearby monastery of St John, founded in c. 1150, may have been responsible. Hästholmen, on the other hand, undoubtedly owed its presence to nearby Alvastra monastery, for which it acted as a port.[93] It does not appear in written sources until the fourteenth century, by which time it was already a centre for trade and hosted *ting* meetings.

Other factors seem to have led to the rapid increase in the number of towns during the period 1250–1320. Stockholm, Nyköping, Örebro and Jonköping all grew up around castles.[94] As opposed to the *kastaler*, the later and larger royal castles were centres of households and administration, inhabited by those possessing sufficient wealth to live above subsistence level, and naturally attracted settlement by those who produced goods for them. In new economic and political circumstances some became centres that earlier unfortified manors such as Bjälbö, Husby-Backe and Borg had not been. Örebro lay on an important communication route, but there is no evidence that it began to grow before the Folkung administration decided it needed a stronghold in Narke.[95] Its site was not an obvious market, nor was it an ecclesiastical centre. The inspiration behind it may have been that of Magnus Ladulås himself. Similarly, Birger Jarl's castle undoubtedly contributed to the expansion of Nyköping. It is first heard of only in 1250, when Queen Katarina donated the land to Gudhem, but may have housed a mint for much of the thirteenth century, since one of Knut Långe's coins bore the inscription NYCOPIE, and the town was among the mints listed in Magnus Ladulås's 1285 testament.

Kalmar had already become an urban centre before its substantial castle was built, during the early thirteenth century. Without doubt trade and the Church contributed to its growth. A large *gård* around the St Nicolaus Church already existed in Birger Jarl's period, and also a Dominican convent. Both lay within the earliest town.

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[93] Klackenburg 1984.
[94] Fritz 1972 p. 34.
[95] Fritz 1972 p. 34. See also Redin 1978 pp. 5–6.

Evidence of Kalmar's links with the ports of northern Germany exists from the early 1250s, when an agreement was made with Lübeck, but they probably began before this.[96] By the reign of Magnus Ladulås the town formed a half-circle round the castle, wherein resided its *fogde*, Magnus Bengtsson (*Folkungaättens lagmansgren*), also *lagman* of Östergötland. During the reign of Magnus Ladulås Kalmar was unquestionably the administrative, commercial and cultural centre of a large part of south-eastern Sweden, and it was to remain so. The other significant town of thirteenth-century Småland, Jönköping, must also have profited from the presence of a castle. It acquired a Franciscan convent in 1283, was the site of a royal mint in 1285, and is also the first known recipient of royal privileges, in 1284 and 1288, testimony to its importance as a commercial and craft centre.[97]

The castle and city of Stockholm have naturally received more attention than other medieval Swedish towns and castles, and this was so even in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Erikskrönikan* relates that Birger Jarl founded the city to act as a gateway into Mälaren and prevent attacks by Karelians. The tale reappeared in Olaus Petri's *En svensk Crönika* and has been widely accepted ever since. As the main port at the entrance to Mälaren Stockholm was a successor to Sigtuna, which itself succeeded Birka. The last mention of Sigtuna occurs in three annals. All agree that it was destroyed in 1187 and that Johan, archbishop of Uppsala, was killed. The earliest of the annals (*Annales 916–1263*) says just this, but *Annales 1160–1336* and *Chronica Visbycensis* also add that both deeds were the work of pagans.[98] *Chronica Visbycensis* states further that the city of Stockholm was founded in the same year. It is not clear that it was founded as a result of the destruction of Sigtuna, although this is the implication. In the seventeenth century the conclusion was drawn that people from Sigtuna founded Stockholm.

Unfortunately there are no records of either town between 1187 and 1252, when Stockholm is mentioned in a letter that concerns an agreement between King Valdemar and the city of Lübeck.[99]

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[96] Birger Jarl's treaties are testimony to this. See Chapter 3:12.

[97] See PSS 1, p. 13. See also Areslätt 1984.

[98] ASMÆ, *Annales 916–1263*, *Annales 1160–1336*, *Chronica Visbycensis*. The pagans were probably Estonian raiders, but may have come from Kurland or even Karelia via the Gulf of Bothnia.

[99] DS 390, DS 391.

Although the foundation entry in *Chronica Visbycensis* may have been an assumption or a mistake on the part of the scribe, it is very likely that Sigtuna did not recover from the destruction of 1187, and that ultimately Stockholm was founded as a result.[100] Sigtuna may have been a *kungsgård*, and there are indications of an association with Olof Skötkonung (995–1021), since there were several churches on the site and many coins from his reign have been found there. Whether it was occupied all year round is uncertain, but it was certainly a trading centre. Destruction is more likely to drive seasonal occupants away from a settlement than those who have nowhere else to go. Other factors may also have contributed to its demise; for instance, although the site was suitable for beaching longships or knarrs it was not suitable as a harbour for vessels with a deeper draught, which began to appear in the twelfth century and were necessary for the transport of horses and heavier equipment which appeared in the late thirteenth century.[101] The same thing may have influenced the abandonment of Köping in favour of Borgholm on Öland.

The site of Stockholm was not an obvious harbour, but it was the ideal place to control river traffic from Mälaren to the Baltic.[102] 'Holm' means small island, but the origin of the name 'stock' is not so clear: it could refer to logs, a palisade, piles or a narrow rushing torrent of water.[103] The earliest evidence of it as a city occurs in 1270s, its seal is first mentioned in 1281, and it is referred to as *cives* in 1288.[104] In 1289 it is called 'the town which within a few years has become more populous than all other towns in our land'. In 1269 King Valdemar met with his nobility in Stockholm, and in 1290 Magnus Ladulås dubbed a knight in Norrmalm. Magnus was buried in the church of the Franciscan nunnery in 1292, which he himself had founded, this act in itself a recognition of Stockholm's growing importance. The first surviving seal dates from 1296.

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[100] Ahnlund, for instance, guesses that it was founded in c. 1190: Ahnlund 1953 pp. 1, 26.

[101] There were probably not many deeper-draught vessels in the mid-thirteenth century. What contemporaries referred to as cogs were not necessarily larger than Viking-Period vessels. See Bill 2003 pp. 43–45.

[102] Fritz 1972 p. 162.

[103] See Dahlbäck 1987 p. 17.

[104] DS 975.

Considerable topographical changes occurred around the site of Stockholm over this period. In c. 1250 Helgeandsholmen was two islands, but one of these had only recently become separated from the mainland as a result of the construction of a moat.[105] In a letter of 1320 from the archbishop of Uppsala the island is named thus (lit. 'Island of the Holy Spirit') and Barkarsholmen is called 'Little Stockholm'.[106] The Houses of the Holy Spirit (*Helgeandshusen*) were a phenomenon of the Baltic region. The earliest known was in Lübeck, they were in Denmark in the mid-thirteenth century and probably reached Sweden by c. 1290.

At the very least Birger Jarl provided the conditions for Stockholm to become an important city. It may have begun to grow at the same time as the castle, and grew faster than any other town, so that inhabitants were already building over the water around Stadsholmen by the 1330s. There is no evidence that this expansion was planned. During the late thirteenth century the highest part in the centre of the island was occupied, the later 'Inner Quarter' forming a triangular town with its base facing the castle.[107] This may have had a defensive wall around it, but no archaeological or written evidence records one.

In Västergötland only Skara and Lödöse could be described as towns in the Middle Ages. In the late-thirteenth century Skara had a cathedral, Dominican and Franciscan convents, a castle and a royal mint. It was also the site of the *landsting* (*alla götars ting*).[108] Lödöse was a harbour, and owed more to trade, which at this time was still oriented to the west. Possibly because of this it was also a mint, and had a Dominican convent and a hospital (founded in 1243 and 1286 respectively).[109] Apart from this town's shift to Nya Lödöse in the fifteenth century, there was little urban development in Västergötland after this, probably because of its geographical position and the lack of royal initiative in granting privileges.

The rapid growth in towns after 1250 can be attributed to several factors, among them the continuing favourable conditions for agriculture and the increase in land under cultivation, expansion in

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[105] This is now a tongue of Gamla Stan.
[106] DS 3541.
[107] Dahlbäck 1987 p. 38.
[108] See Sigsjö 1980.
[109] Klackenberg 1985 pp. 257–60, K. Carlsson and Ekre 1980.

trade, especially with north German ports, monetisation, the creation of new cultural and economic centres through the construction of castles, and the arrival of the mendicant orders in Sweden. Although economic conditions were similar throughout the Baltic region, the development of Scandinavian towns differed from that of those on the south Baltic coast. These were fortified before they became controlled by German (or germanised) princes and traders, and later became cities with encircling walls, ditches and gates.[110] The threat to the new twelfth-century 'German' settlements of east-central Europe was very much greater than to any lordship in contemporary Sweden, where, despite the series of internal wars, damage to settlements seems to have been minimal. In Scandinavia kings and their administrators played their part, not only in building castles but also in regulating trade and, more indirectly, through donations to ecclesiastical foundations.

10.8. *Mendicant orders and urbanisation*

Whereas the Cistercians had provided markets and possibly stimulated economic growth, the Dominican and Franciscan Orders had a more direct influence on urban life. Unlike Orders of monks, the mendicants did not live in autonomous foundations under the authority of abbots, working in a fixed place or on a fixed area of land. Many moved from place to place within their district, a function of their tasks, and could move between convents. The Orders had a constitutional structure, with general and provincial capitals where representatives from the other convents met, every three years and every year respectively. The mendicant orders saw their task in the perspective of the whole Baltic region, and Scandinavia was one province, Dacia. The Dominicans arrived in Sweden in 1237, when a convent was founded at Uppsala.[111]

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[110] A transitional phase has therefore been postulated for Slavic settlements on the southern Baltic coast. It is arguable that Birgitta Fritz makes too much of German comparisons in her study *Hus, land och län*. See, for instance, Pelc 1996 pp. 157–162.

[111] A Danish and a Swedish priest became members of the order in Bologna in 1219. The year after, Gaufred from Sigtuna visited Italy, and all three returned to Sigtuna to found a convent. Despite the support of the Pope and Knut Långe, for some unknown reason this endeavour was obstructed by Archbishop Olof Basatömir

In Sweden the Dominicans chose to settle in episcopal centres, the earliest foundations being in Skänninge, Östergötland, and Söderköping in Södermanland. Västerås and Skara already had cathedrals, but even there expansion into towns was assisted by the Dominican presence, often occurring shortly after their settlement. The consecration of the Sigtuna convent church occurred in 1247. Of the twenty-two convents of Dacia founded before 1253, eight were in Sweden (including Gotland). Although there was no official hierarchy among Dominican convents, Sigtuna subsequently became the *de facto* Dominican centre of Scandinavia when the Order's members in Lund fell out of favour with Archbishop Jakob as a result of their support for King Christoffer I (1252–59), with whom he was embroiled in a long dispute. Sigtuna became one of the centres of theological studies, but also provided the earliest known annals of Sweden. The stimulus to increased learning thereby assisted in the growth of town administration.

According to Petrus Olai, writing in the period 1520–30, the Franciscans arrived in Lund in 1238, summoned by Archbishop Uffe.[112] They were in Visby in 1233 and Söderköping in 1235. They had established five convents in Sweden by 1250, of which two were in episcopal centres without Dominican establishments, Linköping and Uppsala, where they provided the recruits for the earliest cathedral chapter. A convent was founded in Stockholm in 1270. Like the Dominicans, they had a powerful influence on the development of an urban spirit in expanding towns, but arguably in a different way, encouraging a growth in popular piety.

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of Uppsala, and it did not finally occur until 1237, after Olof died, and was replaced by a more friendly archbishop, Jarler, who later found a church for them and is traditionally supposed to have donated land. Nilsson 1998 p. 153.

[112] Our knowledge of Franciscan penetration of Scandinavia is poor, as it is largely dependent on sources from this period, Petrus Olai being the most important: see SMHD 2, *De ordine fratrum minorum* pp. 279–324.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CHURCH AND THE IDEOLOGY OF KINGSHIP

11.1. *Church and state*

The Christianisation of Sweden was a slow process, even if looked at from the perspective of our limited written sources. Since most of them were written by clerics, whether in the service of Church or king, they reflect the ideological standpoint of the Church, a conscious view of a Christian society. There is some evidence that pagan beliefs were still thriving in certain regions shortly before Sverker's accession. For the Danes and Norwegians, their supposed survival in the west of Småland provided an excuse to plan a joint expedition, which could be presented as a crusade. The Norwegian king Sigurd Jorsalfar ('Jerusalem-farer') carried out the attack in 1123, but it appears that King Niels of Denmark lacked the necessary religious zeal, or perhaps desire for plunder: either way, he failed to put in an appearance, ostensibly because the Norwegians were late for the planned rendezvous.[1] A certain Erik Årsäll is recorded as carrying out pagan rites in Svealand during the 1120s.[2] He may have been a short-lived king, like Ragnvald, the king expelled from the Västergötland *ting* and then killed by the *götar*. Other sources tell of persecuted Christian missionaries and clerics. One victim may have been Botvid, who died for his faith in Uppland in 1120, according to his *vita*. His remains were elevated in 1128 or 1129, and a wooden church was built and consecrated by two bishops, Gerder of Strängnäs and Henrik of Uppsala, who had been summoned for the purpose.[3] Henrik is presumably the same 'Henricus expulsus de Swethia' who was killed at Fotevik in 1134, last in the list of the five bishops who

[1] SSH, *Magnússona saga* 24, p. 736. It might be worth recording that, according to Snorri, Sigurd was by this time prone to bouts of madness, caused by laughing at a fish he believed he saw in his bath.
[2] SSH, *Magnússona saga* 24, p. 736.
[3] Vita Sancti Botvidi martyris p. 382.

died in the battle.[4] Perhaps he was an associate of Margareta Fredkulla, daughter of King Inge, who married Niels in 1103, hence his flight to Denmark. Nor was Henrik the only bishop driven from Sweden; in the chronicle of Rastede monastery in Germany, where he later became abbot, Siward, bishop of Uppsala, is also said to have been driven from his diocese by pagans.[5]

Whereas some historians have interpreted the expulsions as the result of conflict between the sees of Lund and Hamburg-Bremen, Nyberg has argued that both these and Sigurd's Småland expedition might have coincided with the eight-year sacrificial cycle of the pagan astronomical calendar, at which times there would have been cause for disturbances by the unconverted.[6] Both reasons are possible. Uppsala must have acquired something of a reputation in northern Germany through Adam of Bremen's earlier description of a pagan temple and human sacrifice there. Despite his suspect account, there is no reason to dismiss out of hand the evidence of the German sources when they attribute later problems to pagan resistance.[7] Brink also believes that the high status of Uppsala as a pagan cult centre, where kings acted as Freyr's representative and celebrated cultic feasts every ninth year, hindered the Christianisation of northern Svealand.[8] The see of Uppsala was established in the 1120s or 30s, and it is possible that it was only at this late date that this was feasible.[9] Remains of a wooden structure have been found there, possibly a

[4] So-called in the *Chronicon Roskildensis* (Chronicle of Roskilde): SMHD 2, p. 29. The *Necrologium Lundense* refers to Henrik as *Henricus Sictunensis*, but the *Vita Sancta Botvidi* says he came from Uppsala. A possible reason is that Uppsala was the centre of a bishopric when Henrik would have been in Sweden, but had become part of the diocese of Strängnäs by the time the *Vita* was written. Henrik was probably bishop of Sigtuna, and may have been there while Siward was in Uppsala.

[5] Nyberg 2000 pp. 122–23.

[6] Nyberg 2000 p. 120. He refers to the calculation of a pagan ritual calendar by G. Henriksson in his article 'Riksbloten och Uppsala högar' (1995). For the view that the expulsions resulted from a conflict between the two sees, see, for instance, Kumlien 1962 pp. 284–88.

[7] ABG 4:26–28, pp. 259–61. There are considerable difficulties with the interpretation of Adam's text: see Chapter 1, p. 12, note 29 and Gräslund 1998 p. 174.

[8] Brink 1990 p. 67. See 11.2 below for a discussion of the problem of pagan 'sacral kingship'. ABG *Schol 140* refers to the holding of pagan festivals *post novem annos*, which could be every eighth or every ninth year, hence the difference in interpretation between Brink and Henriksen, referred to in note 6 above.

[9] This has been argued by a number of scholars: see for instance, Zachrisson 1998 pp. 126–164.

hall which might have had cultic functions. If there was a 'temple' at Gamla Uppsala, it may have been destroyed when Inge the Elder defeated Blot-Sven in the 1080s, or even as late as the 1120s, shortly before the bishop moved there from Sigtuna.

Whatever the risks in establishing a diocese at Uppsala at this date, it was probably considered a necessary step in extinguishing a centre of paganism. As elsewhere, in Scandinavia a number of churches were built on sites which were probably important to pagans, including, besides Uppsala, Vendel, Sanda-Säby and Borg in Sweden, Mære in Norway and Gudme in Denmark. In these cases there is archaeological evidence of halls that were probably multi-functional (including use for cultic purposes), which existed shortly before the construction of churches. There is much wider place-name evidence that churches were built on former cult-sites, although such evidence gives no certainty that cultic activity had taken place within living memory at the times the churches were built. Names of places with churches include components that give a general indication of sanctity such as *vi-*, implying a cult-site,[10] *hel-*, implying divine protection (cf. modern Swedish *helig*), *gud-*, referring to a deity or deities, specific deity names such as *Ull-* or *Frö-*, or *thul* (*thol, þola, þala*), *vivil* and *lytir*, all probably names of cult officials.[11] Construction of churches on former cult-sites has been seen as evidence of both continuity in practice by local communities and deliberate extirpation of pagan centres by the Church or its supporters, a symbol of Christ's triumph over evil. As will be seen, a similar debate has occurred about the origin and use of legendary texts.

The triumph of Christianity at Uppsala eliminated the last great pagan cult centre in Scandinavia, but it must have taken longer to win over the population of northern Svealand, Gastrikland and Norrland, particularly in outlying settlement districts. As late as 1177, *Sverris saga* records that Sverre encountered many pagans in 'Jernberaland' ('Iron-producing-land', presumably Dalarna, later to become a major centre of iron production, since he was travelling from Värmland to Jämtland via this region and Härjedalen).[12] If overtly pagan practices survived after 1130, this was among small farmers

[10] Proto-Norse *wíha*R, *-væ(r), vi(r)* or *vae(r)*.
[11] Vikstrand 2001 pp. 226–30, and Hellberg 1986 p. 60.
[12] Sverris saga 12, p. 12.

and woodsmen in sparsely populated areas, but old customs also persisted elsewhere in the form euphemistically referred to as folk religion. While it is undeniable that the upper strata of society in Götaland and Svealand had accepted Christian ideology by 1130, the change in mentality is much more difficult to measure. Anne-Sofie Gräslund refers to 'mentality', in contrast to 'ideology' as 'a set of unconscious or conscious but inarticulated attitudes and values common to a society or group of people', sometimes referred to as 'folk belief'. While written sources tend to reflect ideology, archaeology may give evidence of more collective attitudes.[13]

Despite the apparently uncompromising attitude of Christianity to 'non-Christian' beliefs, syncretism did occur, and had occurred from the time that Christianity became widespread in the Roman Empire. Archaeological evidence for the existence of pagan and Christian beliefs existing side by side is unequivocal, although there are few characteristics that definitively mark burials as pagan or Christian.[14] Even in the early fourteenth century, the *landskapslagar* prohibited certain activities that might be construed as survivals of pagan practice. These prohibitions refer to 'folk religion' as practised by the lower strata of society. What the bulk of medieval society, its peasantry, required most of higher powers was no doubt all that contributed to good yields from crops and animals, whereas the priorities of the nobility may have been quite different. For them, consciously or unconsciously, it was important that religion reinforced the prevailing social structure. Once the initial mission phase was over, the people who erected Christian rune-stones and Eskilstuna sarcophagi, and, most importantly, who founded the first churches and installed their priests, were those who had the greatest influence over the way in which the Christian message was delivered.

There are considerable difficulties in establishing the nature and origin of Sweden's early churches. Unfortunately places with churches that took the names of their founders are rare in Sweden, although there are a few. On the whole settlement names predominate, *socknar* taking the names of *byar* or *gårdar*, which give a clue as to who

[13] Gräslund 2001 pp. 11–14.

[14] See, for instance, Gräslund 2001 pp. 43–55. Only the burial of animals alongside the dead seems to be a distinctively pagan practice. Gräslund thinks cross-marked rune-stones marked the earliest Christian graves in Uppland (pp. 53–59).

might have built the church, *bönder* or noble. Ståhle and Kjöllerstrom argued that the oldest church lands were donated by kings and wealthy landowners.[15] In Gästrikland, Småland, Jämtland and Medelpad the *socknar* were mostly named after settlements, whereas they tended to take the names of old settlement districts in Hälsingland.[16] In Götaland and Dalsland, as in Denmark, the vast majority of *socknar* were named after *gårdar* or villages. Brink suggests that many *bygd* names in Götaland became *härad* names, before the formation of *socknar*, which were much smaller and therefore took different names.[17] The evidence from place-names is generally inconclusive, but does suggest that many churches in Götaland were founded by landowners. However, although many of the earliest lands owned by the Church in Sweden were donated by kings, there is no good evidence for the pattern suggested for Anglo-Saxon England by John Blair, who concluded that royal power was responsible for the beginning of church building, when minsters (central churches) were founded from the late seventh century onwards. Local and private church foundation followed, from the late ninth to the twelfth centuries. As in Sweden, a second phase of local church building in stone saw the replacement of wooden ones as well as new foundations (in England from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries). This phase coincided roughly with the establishment of the parish system.[18]

Whereas the Norwegian law texts differentiate between different types of church the Swedish *landskapslagar* use only one word, *kyrka*. As in Norway, churches must have had varying status, particularly according to whether they were for private or community use. The Later *Västgötälagen* hints at this, but does not use separate names.[19] Rules for the requirements of priests and equipping of churches vary considerably between the different *landskapslagar*, as do the rules for appointments.[20] Even when the *landskapslagar* provide rules for replacement of bishops their churches are not differentiated from others.[21]

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[15] Ståhle 1975 p. 38.

[16] See Chapter 6: Hälsingland was one of the last areas to be divided into *socknar*, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

[17] Brink 1990 p. 137.

[18] Blair 2005 pp. 79–134, 368–433.

[19] VgL2 Kk 2.

[20] UL Kk 2:1, ÖgL Kk 1, SdmL Kk 2 and 3, VmL Kk 2, DL Kk 3:2, SkL 3:1 and 3:2.

[21] SdmL Kk 5, ÖgL Kk 2, TK 12.

Churches are not distinguished by size or structure, except where specific rules are given for building wooden ones. Such churches must have been the norm in and before the early twelfth century, and were still built in outlying areas in the fifteenth century. The name *huvudkyrka*, employed by many Swedish scholars to refer to a main church or mother church, was found by Smedberg in only one document, dating to 1425, in which it was contrasted with churches without their own priests (*ridkyrkor*—churches to which the priests had to ride).[22] Some documents in Latin compare *ecclesia* and *capella*. The latter belonged to individuals, kings, bishops and secular landowners. They were not necessarily small, as emphasised by the holding of masses in some of them. Others were places for the dead, also perhaps for the deposition of saints' relics. In Folke Karlsson's testament of 1281 two chapels are listed, one with a chalice and one without, the first donated to Skänninge nunnery, the second, presumably not used for worship, to Stockaryd church.[23]

Churches were owned by kings, bishops, nobles and wealthy *bönder*, ownership often being divided between more than one such person, but also collectively by organisations such as monasteries, cathedrals, universities and hospitals, or, in Scandinavia and parts of Germany, collectives of free farmers (*bönder*). The rights of an owner to carry out certain actions might nevertheless be restricted. Hellström argued that there was little practical difference between churches owned by collectives of *bönder* and those owned by private individuals. The *bönder* were not really the founders of their church, since the means to organise the building belonged to larger landowners; in effect, they had 'lower grade ownership'. On the other hand, as Smedberg pointed out, it would have been difficult for such churches to be sold, loaned with land, or inherited. Their use for profit, or simony, was much more difficult, and bishops were therefore able to exercise greater control over them. The procedure for installation of priests in such churches is unknown, but since it must have been a complicated process, bishops may have handled it.[24]

Of particular interest is the degree of power that kings and powerful nobility exerted over the Swedish church. The verdict of Andreas

[22] Smedberg 1973 p. 70.
[23] DS 742.
[24] Smedberg 1973 pp. 103–05, Hellström 1971 pp. 350–56.

Sunesen, Archbishop of Lund in the early thirteenth century, '. . . there is no church anywhere in the world which is so oppressed by the insolence of the people', suggests that the secular nobility had considerable control over it.[25] In the *Jordabalk* in both versions of *Västgötälagen* it is stated that a whole *by* and its church could be owned by a single man.[26] Complete control over churches was sometimes exercised by their founders, not only churches for their own private use, but those that functioned as *sockenkyrkor*. Such churches could be inherited and were donated and sold by their owners, who even interfered with the liturgy. Perhaps more important than any of these was the right to appoint the priest, who was then indebted to the landowner. A regulation of *Östgötalagen*, 'The king permits the building of the church to begin. The *bönder* finish it', suggests that kings exercised control over the foundation of new churches, at least in Östergötland around the turn of the fourteenth century. Although the Old Swedish wording of the regulation could be interpreted in such a fashion, it is highly improbable that only the king could order church construction, and more likely that the king's permission was required.[27] The regulation belongs to a period when royal interference in the activities of local landowners was becoming increasingly accepted, probably when the law of Östergötland was originally codified. In return for the assistance of the Church in bolstering royal power, some twelfth- and thirteenth-century kings must have assisted in the organisation of *socknar*, so that the Church could raise taxes (most importantly, the *tionde*).[28] Before the Folkung Period, the influence of both king and Church was generally greater in Götaland than further north.

The dangers for the Church in secular control of ecclesiastical offices had been recognised as early as the late fifth century, and it attempted to exert some control by restricting the right to inaugurate a new church to its own prelates. Frankish reforms in the ninth century had attempted to prevent demolition of churches, division or removal of ownership and installation or removal of priests without the agreement of the bishop. A priest had to be a free man with

[25] DS 197.
[26] VgL1 J 15 and VgL2 J 36.
[27] See Lovén 2000a pp. 325–41.
[28] See Chapter 6.

an allowance for upkeep, and even priests of privately owned churches were supposed to attend synods and be visited by their bishop. Although priests could carry out the benediction of a new church, consecration was supposed to be the exclusive task of the bishop.[29] The procedure required a mass, and it was at this time that deposition of relics should have occurred. It is known that such a consecration rite existed in Charlemagne's period, but little trace of its practice is found in medieval sources. The nature of benediction rites as actually practised in the Middle Ages is uncertain; they may have included consecrations, rather than being an additional or alternative rite. Dedication, the third important requirement and arguably the most vital element in the consecration of any new church, could be done through 'simple' or 'high' benediction. Many churches were undoubtedly used when they had not been (in the eyes of the Church) properly consecrated—hence the regulation in the 1234 decretals of Gregory IX, which stated that unconsecrated churches could not be used for holy services and gave rules for their cleansing. However, like virtually all papal pronouncements on rights over church appointments, Gregory's decree implicitly recognised that new churches, at least at parish level, had to begin to function without supervision from prelates.

The series of reforms which had begun in earnest with the election of Gregory VII as pope (r. 1073–85) was directed initially at improving monastic discipline, but thereafter challenged the right of laymen to dispose of ecclesiastical offices, which, it was argued, encouraged moral and financial corruption.[30] This affected not only the right of the emperor to invest bishops, but of small landowners to appoint priests. Ultimately a compromise resulted, by which laymen withdrew from ownership of churches in return for patron's rights. Laymen were now supposed to propose a priest for appointment by the bishop. In effect, the patron could dispose of the *tionde*, church land and income, and had the greatest say in the installation of priests. This may now have been done under canonical formulae, but the overall effect of the changes was limited. Bonnier's

[29] This was the situation at least as early as the Council of Braga in 563, when moves were made to prevent consecration of churches built for private purposes. The history of the benediction rite is unclear, since the earliest known is from 1614.

[30] The most important theoretician of reform had been Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida (1049–61).

research on the churches of Uppland suggested that in northern Uppland the formation of *socknar* still continued in the late thirteenth century, and that new churches of this region, especially costly ones made of brick during the Folkung Period, had an individual character and must have been built by leading noble families.[31] By building these at their own expense, they obtained patron's rights. In addition monasteries retained full rights over their own churches until the late thirteenth century.

Gregory VII had chosen not to challenge the kings of England and France while he was embroiled in his contest with Heinrich IV, let alone concern himself overly with abuses in peripheral regions such as Scandinavia. Sweden had not yet been fully converted, and in all such regions the Church was dependent on secular rulers to protect Christian communities and build new churches. Nevertheless, the effects of the Gregorian reforms spread as more churchmen who embraced its principles achieved high office. One such was Eskil (lived c. 1100–1181), a member of the powerful Thrugot family of Jylland, knight-landowner turned churchman, who became bishop of Roskilde after the cull of bishops at Fotevik and then Archbishop of Lund in 1137, ultimately retiring to become a monk in 1177. Eskil was not named in connection with the establishment of Ringsted monastery in 1135 by the Danish king Erik Emune, and can be assumed to have been unenthusiastic about it, since he believed that monasteries, like the Church in general, should be created for the purpose of spiritual and moral regeneration, not to bolster the prestige and power of kings. Nor was he enthusiastic about the promotion of royal saints' cults, strenuously opposing the extension of the cult of Knud Lavard beyond Ringsted after the accession of Valdemar I in 1157.[32] As an enthusiastic supporter of the reformed Benedictines

[31] Bonnier 1987, especially pp. 160–223, on the Uppland nobility, pp. 224–236 on the north Uppland *socknar*. Bonnier used church furnishings and paintings as well as the buildings themselves for her dating, as previous studies based on the typology of building styles were unsatisfactory, for the same reason that they are for castles (pp. 44–95, 232–55). Although Smedberg is generally sceptical about private ownership of churches, both Bonnier and Rahmqvist and Ferm present good evidence for it: see also Ferm and Rahmqvist 1984 pp. 67–83.

[32] Eskil was more in sympathy with the family of King Niels than that of Knud Lavard, which may have influenced his decision, but his other actions should leave no doubt that he was a reformer and opposed to the idea of the sanctity of kings because he recognised the superiority of the Pope in all matters spiritual.

(Cistercians) and friend of Bernard of Clairvaux, Eskil played his part in the foundation of their communities in Sweden. Generally, however, the influence of Lund over Sweden seems to have been limited, a possible reason why Eskil accepted the need for Sweden to have its own archbishop, as long as the primacy of Lund was acknowledged.

In all the Scandinavian countries royal power grew alongside Christianisation, but the role of kings in the initial conversion process was greater in Denmark and Norway. The reason for this was largely that kings such as Harald Bluetooth and Olaf Tryggvason had more authority in their respective realms than any king of Sweden had before the mid-twelfth century. Various Swedish rune-stone inscriptions record the Christianisation of the region around them by local nobility.[33] Olof Skötkonung and Inge the Elder, the first Swedish king to be addressed by a papal letter, played their parts, but had extreme difficulty in exerting their power throughout Sweden. Their religious foundations were few in number. The connection between the growth in royal power and the growth of the church in Sweden becomes clear only in the reign of Sverker I. So close was this connection that some scholars have seen the Church in Sweden as an adjunct to royal power, although others have seen it as a power in its own right. The majority of monasteries in Sweden were inextricably linked to its great families. Many of the abbots and abbesses were connected to *Erikska ätten*, *Sverkerska ätten* or *Folkungaätten*, and others are known to have had close ties with one of these families. For long periods in the thirteenth century the *Folkungaätten* controlled the bishopric of Linköping, which was close to their extensive landholdings in Östergötland.

In twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scandinavia there were several serious disputes between kings and senior churchmen. The Norwegian king Sverre was at loggerheads with the Church for most of his reign, and the Danish kings Sven Grade and Valdemar I both had difficulties with Archbishop Eskil. Nor were ties of blood or friendship a guarantee of loyalty to a secular ruler once a cleric became a senior churchman: in Denmark there were serious disputes between

[33] Inscriptions such as 'The son of Östman Gudfast raised this stone and made this bridge, and he made Jämtland Christian' (J 1, at Frösön, Sweden's northernmost rune-stone).

Jakob Erlandsen and Christoffer I (r. 1252–59), and between Jens Grand and Erik Menved (r. 1286–1319). Yet there is no evidence of such serious problems between king and senior clergy in Sweden. While the Church was establishing its authority in any region its interests usually lay in cooperation with its rulers, and if they too were trying to increase their authority and prestige the Church was a useful ally. Such was the situation in Sweden during the twelfth century. Even in the early thirteenth century the king remained the best guarantor of peace and security for ecclesiastical centres.

Despite the lack of evidence for conflict between Church and kingdom in Sweden, a number of scholars have persisted in trying to interpret relations between king, secular nobility and church in the light of the investiture contest and subsequent events in medieval Germany.[34] In addition, a pro- or anti-Gregorian stance has been seen as an important cause of the dynastic feuds of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, with the *Erikska ätten* and *Folkungaätten* generally seen as supporters of reform and the universal church, the *Svekerska ätten* as supporters of aristocratic control of the church in Sweden alongside the conservative nobility of Svealand. The theory does not stand up to scrutiny, and is flatly contradicted by some of the evidence.[35] From the limited written evidence available, it seems that the Church had difficulty even in enforcing the collection of its taxes. Several letters were sent by popes asking for enforcement of the *tionde* in the pontificate of Alexander III, and this continued until the reign of Magnus Ladulås. As in many other lands, the Church also fought a constant battle to obtain freedom from royal taxation and military service on church lands, and to free its people from secular judgement.[36]

Many of the advances made in propagation of the royal image during the late thirteenth century were due in no small measure to the Dominican friars. They played a key role in assisting the Swedish takeover of Finland, where they took the brunt of conversion activity, but also in less dangerous activities which strengthened the position

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[34] For instance, Sjöholm 1988.

[35] See Chapter 3, especially 3:14.

[36] For instance, DS 25 (1080), DS 38 (1153), DS 41 (1161), DS 186 (1220), DS 207 (1221), DS 227 (1224), DS 238 (1225), DS 270 (1232). Privileges were confirmed by Johan Sverkersson (DS 184, 1219, confirmed by Honorius III, DS 191, 1220), Erik Eriksson (DS 215, year unknown) and Magnus Ladulås.

of the Folkung kings. The tradition of annal writing among the Scandinavian Dominicans originated in Lund and was taken up at Sigtuna and by the convent of nuns in Skänninge, home of St Ingrid in the late thirteenth century.[37] By this time book production was moving outside the monasteries in continental Europe, but not yet in Sweden. Early annal entries from Sweden concentrate on Danish events, but after 1250 events within Sweden itself dominate secular entries. Annal writing was a laborious duty for the friars, in keeping with many of their other tasks, but there is no evidence that it was positively encouraged by kings. The change from recording of Danish events to Swedish was most probably related to the appointment of Humbertus as master and the strengthening of the Dominican Order in Sweden, which happened in 1253, and which presumably encouraged an increase in the numbers of recruits from Sweden itself. In some cases, as in *Annales 916–1263* and *1208–1288* (*Annales Sigtunensis*), there appears to have been a change of scribe in c. 1253.[38] Recording of secular events nevertheless emphasises the close connections between convents and their benefactors, kings and powerful nobles.

The Franciscans also adopted the tradition of annal-writing, if a little later.[39] However, they were active in copying works elsewhere in Scandinavia by the late thirteenth century. Gallén suggested that they were responsible for Codex ex-Holmensis A 41, written by two hands in c. 1300, which contains the lists of 'Kong Valdermar's

[37] Ingrid Elofsdotter, daughter of Elof, half-brother of Birger Jarl, and one of the founders of the convent.

[38] *Annales 916–1263*, 1r–2r in cod. C70, UB, Uppsala, pp. 20–35, *fol.1r* years 916–1208, *fol.1v* years 1209–1260, and *fol.2r* 1261–63, and yearly list up to 1315. *Annales 1208–88* was found in 1867 in Ängsö castle, Västmanland. Both annals were probably mostly written at Skänninge, although the second may have been started at Sigtuna: see AMSÆ. The next oldest yearbook, *Annales 1160–1336* (Codex C 92 (UUB), might be either Dominican or Franciscan, but has close connection with the Vadstena Diaries. It contains a number of entries not found in the others. All three drew on Danish annals, Cistercian and Dominican. The later annals *266–1430* (included in the collection B 17 (KB) as fol. 113–119) are also in the Dominican tradition, but *916–1430* (D 4, KB Stockholm, and two later versions from c. 1600), also known as *Gråbrödra-annalerna* (without good foundation), is of more uncertain origin.

[39] Remaining Franciscan annals belong to the fifteenth century, among them the *gråbrödradiaret* of Stockholm, the *Visby Chronicle 815–1444* (Cod. B 99, KB, Stockholm), and several lesser or partially extant works.

jordebog', among other assorted items.[40] The codex contains two itineraries, from Ribe to Acre (*Accon*), and from Utlängan (*Utlengi*) in Blekinge to Reval (Tallinn), the so-called 'Danish Itinerary'.[41] The latter is a collection of texts with details of routes and lists of geographical points in the Baltic, which Gallén suggested was useful in their expansion strategy in the region.

11.2. *Sacral kingship—an inheritance from the pagan past?*

During the fifth century Roman political authority collapsed but its church, with its claims to religious leadership in the former territories of the western empire, survived. Those areas that were added to the see through conversion were also claimed. But political authority in the kingdoms carved out from the former empire was divested in kings, and inevitably conflicted at times with the spiritual authority claimed by Rome. The medieval Church undoubtedly provided the means to propagate the royal image, but it also differed from the temple priesthoods of the ancient world in that it did not tolerate beliefs that clashed with its own orthodoxy. Christianity was a universal religion, and the Church of Rome claimed to be the ultimate authority in spiritual matters. Not only did the Church refuse to acknowledge rival deities to its own, but it also proscribed a range of other activities that it associated with pre-Christian beliefs; in other words, it interfered in the everyday lives of all social strata in a way that earlier religious authorities had not. Church claims to authority over religious matters inevitably conflicted with the authority of the secular ruler, since political and religious matters were not inseparable. From the time of Gregory VII onwards, the Church sought to remove religious institutions and prelates, who were often also powerful landowners, from secular jurisdiction. It is probable that the rulers who established kingdoms in the ruins of the Roman Empire did seek sacral support to give them added legitimacy, but what form this took and the extent to which it may have derived from pagan sacral kingship are not easy to ascertain.

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[40] Other scholars assumed that it was the work of Cistercian monks. See especially Gallén 1993. The codex is in the Danske Rigsarkiv (National Archive).

[41] The *Danish Itinerary* (Codex fol. 127^{v}, 128^{r} and 128^{v}) is reproduced as printed text and in facsimile in Gallén 1993 pp. 48–53.

Medieval Christianity inherited a variety of concepts from the Roman, Hellenistic and Persian worlds, and the rulers of western Europe had an example of a ruler who combined the role of emperor and priest and did not accept the authority of the Bishop of Rome in the emperor of the eastern Roman Empire, himself the inheritor of a long Hellenistic and Roman sacral king-emperor tradition, albeit one who now ruled by the grace of God and was sometimes subject to the censure of the Church.[42] The western Empire re-established by Charlemagne drew its inspiration from the traditions of both the old Roman Empire and Byzantium, real and imagined.[43] Even before the slow disintegration of the western Roman Empire in the fifth century AD, Christianity had become a religion of the elite. It had become well established among Roman aristocrats before the violence that erupted in many towns during the last two decades of the fourth century in the face of repressive anti-pagan legislation. As observed by Robert Markus, there was no coherent 'pagan religion' within the empire (any more than there was in any of its successor kingdoms) and only this threat served to unite disparate pagan groups in opposition to the suppression of their beliefs.[44] At the same time Christians such as Jerome and Augustine became worried that Christianity would assimilate too much secular 'pagan' culture.[45]

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[42] The differences between western and eastern churches were not as great as sometimes imagined. In both Latin and Greek Christendom there was some degree of separation between spiritual and temporal authorities—conversely, it was not only Byzantine emperors who were sometimes referred to as 'priests'. Perhaps the most important distinction was that the medieval eastern Orthodox Church always saw its mission in the context of a unity between it and the *basileia* (empire), whose rulers directed the human affairs of the world and were appointed guardians of the faith. The differences in emphasis arose because the ideas of ecclesiastical thinkers within Latin Christendom, from Augustine onwards, developed in the context of a disintegrated political authority. See Dagron 1993, especially his review of western ideas about 'caesaropapism' and the reality of the supposed medieval east-west ideological schism, pp. 282–312.

[43] See, for instance, Herrin 1987 pp. 446–62.

[44] Certain pagan rulers in medieval Europe attempted to emulate their Christian counterparts and strengthen their rule by instituting an 'official' pagan cult around their own person. Vladimir of Kiev did this before abandoning it in favour of Byzantine Christianity, and Mindaugas of Lithuania did the same in the fourteenth century. The Lithuanian cult lasted until the end of the century, when its rulers finally adopted Roman Christianity. These cults differed from the Roman emperor-cult in that they made no attempt to promote former princes to the rank of deity. Vladimir's was very short-lived, but the Lithuanian cult was similar to the Roman one in that it was not exclusive of other beliefs.

[45] Markus 1990 pp. 27–34.

Through their writings and the actions of ascetics Christianity affirmed what James Russell has called its 'world-rejecting' ethos. The problem of how much accommodation should be made for 'pagan' religiosity among the predominantly rural population of northern Europe during conversion was to preoccupy successive Popes and prelates during the Early and High Middle Ages. In order to facilitate conversion, some compromises proved necessary. Gregory I ('the Great') recognised this at the turn of the seventh century, when, having initially suggested to King Æthelberht that he overthrow pagan buildings and shrines, he recommended to Mellitus (Augustine's successor as head of the mission to Kent) that the pagan temples of the English should not be destroyed, but converted into churches.[46]

Once Christianity had become firmly established in England, Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany followed a similar policy of accommodation to existing culture. Russell has argued that, in attempting to establish a foothold in the hope that converts would come to accept more and more Christian doctrine, missionaries inadvertently opened the door to a partial Germanisation of Christianity:

> To the extent that the Christian ideological matrix of sin-repentance-salvation advanced among the Germanic peoples in the early Middle Ages, it may be said that they were Christianised, while to the extent that Christianity accommodated the religio-political and magico-religious orientation of pre-Christian Germanic religiosity during this period, it may be said to have been Germanised.[47]

As his successors were to do later when Scandinavia was Christianised, missionaries such as Boniface recognised that they needed the coercive

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[46] Richards 1980 pp. 243–45. Clearly, seven centuries later, Alexander IV was less enthusiastic about re-use of pagan sites. Over a century after Gamla Uppsala had become a Christian centre, when the church was burnt down, he ordered Bishop Karl of Västerås to move the see and chapter of Uppsala . . . *quod eorum ecclesia est in vili et despecto loco fundata* ('because the church was founded in a vile and despicable place'—DS 451).

[47] Russell 1994 p. 162. In common with Russell and other scholars, when referring to pagan religious beliefs the term 'religiosity' is preferred here to 'religion', as they were an organic part of Germanic culture, inseparable from its other aspects, whereas 'religion' implies practices and doctrines that do not necessarily relate directly to everyday social activities. Conversely, it has been argued that the physical distance between celebrant and the majority of the faithful, who participated less in religious activities, was increased as a result of 'Germanisation': see, for instance, Klauser 1979. This separation of celebrant and priest was also characteristic of some ancient states, although in both the Greek city-states and pagan Rome religious offices were awarded to citizens in temporary tenure rather than held by a specialised priesthood.

authority of secular rulers to protect clergy, monks and nuns in mission areas and to prevent apostasy.[48] By the time serious efforts were made to convert the people of Scandinavia, a 'top down' conversion policy had been adopted, through which rulers and upper nobility were to be converted first. Russell contends that the reliance of Christian missions on military force and the use of terminology derived from the *comitatus* institution (warrior aristocracy) to convey the Christian message resulted in a form of Christianity that was adapted to the Germanic world-view, especially in its acceptance of 'Germanic' political and military ideals. Initially many converts saw Christ and Christian saints as they had seen earlier deities and related to them in a traditional magico-religious manner. This had dangers for the new religion during the initial conversion phase, which might be rejected if Christ and his saints did not answer the everyday needs of the 'converted'. Although views may subsequently have been modified, popular or 'folk' religiosity retained this magico-religious character throughout the Middle Ages.[49] As a result there was an increased concentration on shrines and relics and the liturgy acquired a more dramatic and allegorical character.[50]

For the vast majority of medieval people, as for their pagan ancestors, the difference between sacred and worldly that we would recognise did not exist, and everyday life was permeated by ritual activity that was supposed to obtain divine intervention in everyday events. Many medieval saints' days coincided with seasonal festivals, their processions often acquired the character of fertility rituals, and offerings were made to them in the hope that they would intervene on behalf

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[48] So Boniface wrote to Daniel of Winchester in the early 740s, his earlier preaching mission to Frisia having failed in 716: *Sine patricinio principis Francorum nec populem ecclesiae regere nec presbiteros vel clericos, monacos vel ancillas Dei defendere possum nec ipsos paganorum ritus est sacrilegia idolorum in germania sine illius mandato et timore prohibere valeo* ('Without the support of the Frankish prince [Charles Martel] I can neither govern the members of the Church nor defend the priests, clerks, monks and maids of God; nor can I, without orders from him and the fear inspired by him, prevent the pagan rites and the sacrilegious worship of idols in Germany'): Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullius epistolae p. 130.

[49] For examples of overtly 'un-Christian' activities such as the making of traditional offerings to spirits, sometimes placed on grave-mounds, see, for example, Olrik and Ellekilde 1926 pp. 229–49. The Norwegian *Gulatings Lov* explicitly prohibited the making of sacrifices to grave-mounds: NGL 1 p. 18. On the possibility of the survival of pagan traditions in dramatic activities, see Gunnell 1995 pp. 23–140.

[50] See Klauser 1933 pp. 169–89.

of the sick, or to secure a good harvest.[51] At the same time, aristocratic dominance of religious institutions ensured that the existing social structure was reinforced. Since the Christianity that was brought to Scandinavia had already absorbed much of the pre-Christian religiosity of the peoples who had previously been converted, most importantly, from the Scandinavian perspective, what Russell has called Germanic religiosity, it was more easily adopted by Scandinavians than it would have been in its late fourth-century form, conditioned primarily by urban-centred Roman culture.

An important question, more relevant to the consolidation of royal power and the creation of the state than the survival or extinction of ancient folk beliefs, is the extent to which the Christian ideology of kingship was the creation of the Christian Middle Ages or an inheritance from the pagan past. A central problem in any discussion of the possible pre-Christian origin of medieval sacral kingship is the difficulty in establishing what 'Germanic' pagan religiosity or 'folk religion' really was, since our written sources are all products of Christian writers, often hostile, and often produced long after the conversion from paganism had begun. Since pagan beliefs of the early Middle Ages were already influenced by Christianity and earlier Roman and Greek mythology, the contribution made by the writers themselves to their accounts is not always clear.[52] In attempting

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[51] According to the eighteenth-century antiquarians Scheffer and Peringskiöld the relics and banner of St Erik were carried in the fields around Uppsala to secure fertility of the land, both on May 18, the supposed anniversary of his death (see below, 11.3) and during the Disaþing: see Stjerna 1898 and Hultgård 1992 pp. 49–103 (pp. 62–68). The *Miracula Sancti Erici Regis et Martyris* ('Miracles of St Erik') include numerous examples of prayers and invocations made to St Erik, or of pilgrimages to his shrine, to secure fertility of the land, or to cure diseases and injuries. For instance, in Miracle 26, King Birger Magnusson's steward Karl Tyske secured Erik's aid in curing the king in return for a donation at his shrine, and in miracle 41 prayers and a gift of silver secured rain and a good harvest. See SRS 2, pp. 296–97, 304–05.

[52] Medieval Christian descriptions were influenced by classical literature, in which powerful deities were 'organised' into pantheons, often extended families, deriving ultimately from the model of Hesiod, and many modern writers on Nordic paganism have followed their lead. While it is true that in his *Edda* Snorri Sturluson avoids 'anti-pagan' polemic of the sort that many clerical writers of his age indulged in, it seems unwise, as scholars such as Sigurðar Nordal have done, to assume that he was reporting pre-Christian mythological tales in virtually the same form that they were told two hundred and fifty years earlier. Some of the poems quoted by Snorri were no doubt much older than his own work, but had probably been orally transmitted. Consciously or unconsciously, Snorri or his sources must have been

to reconstruct pre-Christian 'religions', modern scholars have frequently combined elements from widely different eras, regions and sources. On the one hand it is held that European pagan religiosity was an inherent part of the social structure of ethnic or folk groups in which they existed, defining their identity and oriented around cult practices, on the other that we can speak of a commonality of belief among the speakers of Germanic languages, or even among the speakers of Indo-European languages.[53] While the

influenced by Christian belief, and he had a good knowledge of classical literature. Some of the stories of Norse gods, particularly those of Thor, border on parody, as, for instance, in *Skaldskarparmal* when Thor is almost washed away while crossing a river that is caused to flood by the menstruating giantess Gialp urinating into it. Even more so than in Snorri's *Edda*, in many modern works Nordic pagan religion appears as a relatively coherent structure with a pantheon of high deities, a picture which contrasts with that given of the beliefs of the Slavic, Baltic and Finno-Ugrian speaking groups, who seem to have had a multiplicity of deities or spirits whose characteristics, importance and relationships with each other varied from place to place. In his analyses of Indo-European religiosity Georges Dumézil (see n. 53 below) tended to assume a Germanic organisation of deities similar to that of polities that had a written culture and that were either states or on the road to statehood, such as those of India and Rome; but it is questionable how much of this 'organisation' Celtic or Germanic-speaking groups inherited from an ancient pan Indo-European mythology and how much was acquired from relatively recent (Iron Age-Viking Age) influence. One might ask also whether the religiosity of Germany and Scandinavia in the pre-Christian (or certainly the pre-Christian influenced) era had as many, if not more, similarities to non Indo-European speaking regions of the north, such as the Finno-Ugric speaking groups. Recently several works have drawn comparisons between elements of Nordic belief as portrayed in medieval sources and the magical or 'shamanic' practices of other Northern Eurasian people, as they have survived in oral poetry and other sources—see, for instance, Dubois 1999 and Price 2002. For some comments on the pre-Christian beliefs of Slavic and Finno-Ugrian linguistic groups and the difficulty of uncovering their pre-Christian beliefs from later sources, see, for instance, Barford 2001 pp. 188–99, Viires 1989 and Hoppál 1989, pp. 139–46 and 147–54 respectively. For a good example of recorded oral poetry that has some relation to Nordic mythology and an analysis of its slow transformation under the influence of successive changes in belief, see Kuusi, Bosley and Branch [eds] 1977. This collection includes an example of a poem with clear pre-Christian origins, 'The Great Ox', and a probable Christian parody, 'The Great Pig', in which pagan deities flee from a large pig: pp. 268–69 and 547–48. See also Sigurðar Nordal's 'Introduction' to *The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson* (Ed. Jean Young).

[53] Dumézil 1958, 1977, and for his ideas on Nordic mythology, Dumezil 1973. Dumézil proceeded from the theory that the myths of a people were ciphers of their social structures, which they also served to reinforce. In the mythology and societies of India, Iran, Greece, Rome, the Gauls and the Germans he identified a tripartite division into warriors, priests and 'herder-cultivators'. He further claimed that there was an 'Old Aryan' (Indo-European) priest-king ideology, which was inherited by the peoples speaking later Indo-European languages. Although he

two are not necessarily incompatible, there is a danger that lack of evidence for individual pagan cults leads to over-generalisations, with a uniformity of religious or cultic practices assumed within a given ethnic group, itself often defined in terms of linguistic affinity. Attributes of deities must have constantly shifted in an oral society, especially when tribal confederations formed and reformed constantly, so that a given name used by two Roman writers a century apart might represent two quite different 'peoples' or ethnic amalgamations.[54] Myths of ethnogenesis are difficult to interpret, and while royal genealogies may have used the names of pagan deities, these were often euhemerised, which undermines the theory that they provided a supernatural origin for the dynasty. Neither has much in common with the later legends of medieval saints.[55]

Much early work on 'divine' or 'sacral' kingship was centred on the civilizations of the Near East and Mediterranean, assumed to be the source of similar ruler ideologies elsewhere in accordance with evolutionary theory.[56] As a result the models of scholars such as S.J. Hooke were subsequently imposed upon the very different societies of pre-Christian Germanic-speaking Europe.[57] Regardless of whether these are defined as chiefdoms or nascent states, the kingdoms of this era and region lacked the written culture, bureaucracies and standing armies of the early Near Eastern city-states and kingdoms,

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concedes that not everyone agrees with it, Russell accepts Dumézil's thesis: Russell 1994 pp. 107–20. However, even if this is not accepted, Russell's argument that Christianity was Germanised is not necessarily undermined, since it is dependent on the correctness of his view of Germanic culture in the later Iron Age and early Middle Ages, not that of its distant origins.

[54] See Pohl 2000, especially pp. 65–72, and Hummer 1998 pp. 1–27.

[55] As an example of theories which assume a direct continuation from pagan to Christian sacral kingship (even, in this case, that saints' cults were derived from pagan models), see Hauck 1955 pp. 186–223.

[56] For some early theories of middle eastern sacral kingship see Hooke and Blackman [eds.] 1933.

[57] Not only has this method been criticised since the mid-twentieth century, but early scholars of the Near East were themselves attacked for assuming too great a similarity between the early kingdoms of that region: see Frankfort 1948, and the preface to the 1978 edition by Samuel Noah Kramer. For a good summary of early sacral kingship theory and how it was applied to Scandinavia, see Sundqvist 2002 pp. 18–24. As Sundqvist observes, many disputes about the nature of pre-Christian kingship have arisen because scholars have begun with quite different definitions of the divine or sacral king. Few now use the term 'divine king' to refer to early Germanic rulers.

and very probably many other institutions such as a specialised priesthood. Pagan 'religions' were generally syncretic, easily absorbing deities and rituals from neighbouring areas. This was particularly so in an oral society, which did not have scribes to set down in words an official or unchallangeable order. Much of what we know about pre-Christian belief in the Near East and Mediterranean has come to us in the form of 'official' religion, written down by a priestly bureaucracy, with a celestial or otherwordly social order that reflected that on earth and reinforced the position of the ruling elite. Despite the power of oral tradition, pre-Christian rulers in Scandinavia did not have the same resources.

Many of the characteristics ascribed to Iron Age Scandinavian kings by mid-twentieth-century scholars derived from *Ynglingatal* interpreted in the light of scholarship on the early Near East. For instance, it was argued that kings at Uppsala celebrated cults as priest-kings, that they were descended from Freyr, that they celebrated a sacred wedding with a fertility goddess, and that they were believed to bestow blessings ('the king's luck') on their people in the form of peace, prosperity and a good harvest.[58] Within the last forty years all these ideas have been undermined. The term 'sacral kingship' is now generally preferred to 'divine kingship', because there is no evidence at all that kings themselves were considered deities.[59] *Ynglingatal* and Snorri's *Ynglinga saga* (the first part of *Heimskringla*), in which it is incorporated, mention only descent from Freyr.[60] The supposed early date of the poem *Ynglingatal* has been questioned, and the peculiar nature of the events related in these, including the bizarre deaths

[58] On divine descent, see, for instance, Henrik Schück 1904, or Turville-Petre 1964 pp. 190–95, and for a recent sceptical view, Norr 1998 p. 167. On the king's luck and his sacrifice in return for fertility, see von Friesen 1932–34 pp. 15–36, and for a sceptical view, L. Lönnroth 1986 pp. 186–223 and Hoffman 1975 pp. 1–22. A.V. Ström (1959 pp. 702–15) has argued that Dumézil's Indo-European priest-king was inherited by Iron Age Sweden.

[59] McTurk 1975–76 pp. 139–69, especially his criticism of the term 'divine kingship' as misleading. Wallace-Hadrill 1971 p. 8 used the term 'cult king'. For an extremely sceptical view on the whole issue, see Baetke 1964 pp. 164–70. As observed by Sundqvist 2002, however, it is Baetke's own definition of sacral kingship, which differs from those of the scholars he criticises, that enables him to demolish the idea so comprehensively.

[60] For the problem of descent from Freyr as represented in *Ynglingatal*, see Sundqvist 2002 pp. 161–66.

of all the kings, may be interpreted as satire.[61] It is also possible that the Freyr-descent story is simple flattery. Although it is not impossible that vestiges of real events of the Swedish Migration or Vendel Periods can be found in the Yngling tales, it is impossible to disentangle them from the distortions and inventions of several centuries.

Despite ever-increasing scholarly doubts about the supposed evidence of continuity from pagan practice in medieval sacral kingship as presented by such as Karl Hauck and Erich Hoffmann the discourse is not over, particularly as regards Scandinavia. Unlike most regions of Europe, Scandinavia, it may be argued, preserved many of its pagan myths in written form, as a strong literary culture flourished, particularly in Iceland, during or shortly after the period of Christianisation. Recently Gro Steinsland has argued that the Ynglingar (the earliest royal dynasty of Norway, who claimed descent from the Ynglingar of Uppland in Sweden) and jarls of Lade traced their origin to the 'sacred marriages' of Odin and Freyr with the giantesses of Jotunheim, Skade and Gerd.[62] This may or may not be correct, as all extant sources, including early skaldic verse, were written after pagan religions had been subjected to strong Christian influence, and the majority after actual conversion. Whereas Bagge argued that there was a lack of kingship ideology in *Heimskringla*, Steinsland claims that the marriage of Harald Hårfagre and Snøfrid, and later that of Erik Blodøks and Gunnhild, have clear mythological overtones, reminiscent of the union of god and giantess in being marriages of opposite universal poles. In Snorri's genealogy, there is a direct line of descent from Snøfrid to Harald Hardråde, half-brother to St Olaf. For Steinsland this implies a sacral kingship ideology, not only in *Heimskringla*, but in *Historia Norvegiae*, *Oláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and a lost source of Snorri's, *Ágrip*. These sources tell of the kings of Norway, but if her interpretation is accepted, there would also be a strong possibility that a similar prototypical sacred marriage existed in pre-Christian Swedish royal genealogies, perhaps involving Freyr, who appears as a royal ancestor in *Ynglingatal* and

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[61] A satirical aspect to the tales would have been in keeping with the early Norse *nið* and *senna* traditions. Krag makes a detailed case for a later dating of the *Ynglingatal* poem, but this is not accepted by a large number of scholars: see Krag 1991 (for example, pp. 54–55 and 87–97) and the criticism of Krag's arguments in Sundqvist 2002 pp. 43–46.

[62] Steinsland 1991, 2000.

whose cult was probably celebrated at Uppsala. However, as prototypical marriages those of gods and giantesses would be unusual, since those known from other mythologies normally involve a union of god and goddess. The union of Freyr with Gerd, whom he successfully courts, may well have represented a triumph of fertility over frigidity in pre-Christian times, but need not have been a prototype for royal marriages.[63] As for the motif of marriage between a high-born man and lowly woman, this was common in medieval literature. Steinsland is undoubtedly right that old motifs might have provided models for Icelandic or other Scandinavian saga writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but this does not necessarily mean that they understood these in the same way as their pagan ancestors may have, or regarded them as bolstering the sacrality of kingship.

One aspect of kingship ideology that persisted through both pagan and Christian periods is a concern with genealogy. From the pre-Christian era several rune-stones provide evidence of this, such as the Rök stone of Östergötland and the Malsta stone of Hälsingland.[64] Ancestry was not only of interest to kings, as witnessed by the numerous genealogical lists in Icelandic family sagas, but both kings and other territorial magnates were concerned to demonstrate their prestigious pedigree. Such descent was emphasised by the practice of naming children after an older member of the family. The Old Swedish word for king, *konunger* (or *kununger*) implies prestigious descent, its original meaning being 'son of a distinguished man', derived from *konr*, 'distinguished man' and the patronymic suffix *-ung-*. The stem *konr* in turn derives from Proto-German *kunja*, 'family/kin' or 'descent'.[65] It may be assumed from this that it was necessary for rulers to show that they were descended from prestigious stock long before the Viking Period. The burials of boys in the eastern mound of Uppsala and Mound XII at Vendel suggest that descent from noble or royal

[63] See Dubois 1999 pp. 55–56. Dubois mentions only the triumph of fertility, and cites Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning*, in which Njord, also probably a fertility god, is the successful courter of Skade. In *Ynglingatal* Njord is named as Freyr's father. Steinsland bases her *hieros gamos* thesis primarily on *Skírnismál* and *Háleygjatal*. The tale of the Odin-Skade union occurs in *Háleygjatal*, several stanzas of which survive in Snorri's *Edda*, *Ynglinga saga* and *Fagrskinna*. It is generally believed to have been written at the end of the tenth century.

[64] Hs 14, in Rogsta *socken*. See Peterson 1989 pp. 224–26.

[65] Hellquist 1922 1, pp. 496–98 and Peterson 1989 p. 28.

stock in itself imbued prestige and nobility by the Vendel Period, even when the descendant had not been able to prove himself as a ruler. In Chapter 8:1 it was mentioned that the interest in genealogy also had a practical purpose at least as early as the Viking Period, acting as proof of land ownership. As the importance of this diminished during the Early and High Middle Ages with the increasing influence of Roman law and the written word, the prestige aspect must have come increasingly to the fore.

After Christianisation numerous dynasties of Europe adopted former pagan gods as distant ancestors, interpreted as human beings. Many Christian writers were familiar with the works of classical authors such as Livy, in which gods appeared in the genealogies of rulers. The pattern for this practice of euhemerism was set by Augustine's *De civitatis dei*, and euhemerised gods appeared thereafter as royal ancestors in works such as Gregory of Tours' (lived c. 539–94) *Historiae Francorum*. As noted, this presents a serious problem for those who wish to use written sources from the Christian era as evidence of descent from deities. Furthermore, it was not only former gods that were adopted as ancestors in Icelandic genealogies of Scandinavian kings, but an assortment of other prestigious biblical, classical and mythical characters, from Adam to Alexander and Priam.[66] The custom of placing euhemerised gods at the head of genealogies was characteristic of early Christian ruler-dynasties, but these traditions persisted in Iceland. As noted in chapter 3, by the twelfth century, to be a candidate for election to the kingship in Scandinavia it seems that the most important criterion was to demonstrate descent not just from a distinguished individual, but from a former king.

Unfortunately Sweden was barely emerging from prehistory at the end of the twelfth century, and does not provide sufficient written evidence to contribute to the discussion on sacral kingship in Scandinavia. There are no practices associated with kingship, administration or the law after 1130 which can be said with certainty to have had pagan origins, or which cannot be attributed to influence from already Christianised Europe. It appears that Christianity, as elsewhere in Europe, permeated the culture of the powerful families of

[66] See Faulkes 1978–79 pp. 92–124, especially pp. 101–06.

Sweden in a relatively short space of time. Nevertheless, in certain general respects it is self-evident that a rulership with sacral aspects, regardless of the ruler's actual power to administer his realm, fulfilled some of the same functions in the ancient Near East, the Hellenistic and Roman worlds and the pagan polities of post-Roman Europe, as well as their Christian successors. The sovereign was supplied with food, manufactured items and services by his people in return for his protection, which included, besides protection against enemies, disorder and poverty, protection against disruptive supernatural forces. Although pro-papal theologians tried to minimise the priestly functions of Latin Christian rulers, they continued to perform rites and mediate between their people and the supernatural. Offerings were not given directly to gods or spirits, but as anointed kings they were in a special position to intercede with God through ritual actions, so that He in turn might intercede in the way that they wished. Medieval nobles used especially the power of prayer, and gave generously to the Church in return for prayers for their souls after they died. Furthermore, the medieval calendar was crowded with religious events in which the king took a prominent part, in the process adopting some priestly functions. The king's position as lawgiver and highest judge was also closely linked to his relationship with sacral powers. Christian kings often based their right to rule on descent from a mythical ancestral character, even if he was no longer a deity. There is no clear indication, however, that sacral aspects of medieval Christian kingship were inherited from a Germanic past, except in so far as Christianity was adapted to Germanic beliefs, and it was in the context of this adapted Christianity that medieval sacral kingship developed.

11.3. *Just kings, servants of Christ and royal saints*

There is good reason to suspect that pagan cults were very localised, but they nevertheless fulfilled some of the same functions as some of the legends of Christian saints. Just as pagan cults were used to reinforce tribal identity, many royal saints' cults were later used to forge national identity, and hence the authority of any king related to the saint. This is true, for instance, of the cults of both Václav of Bohemia and Olaf of Norway. However, as will be seen, this did not occur in Sweden during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. The

origin of the Christian king-saint lies in the attempts of clergy to teach the laity by presenting them with models of virtue designed to set an example. As early as the sixth century the Church portrayed worthy kings as the *rex iustus*, but the idea of the martyr king-saint came later.[67] As the notion of royal sainthood developed, increasing problems arose between Papacy and kings, since the idea of the priest-king who was subservient to the Church sat uneasily with that of the sacral king whose sanctity was his invincibility and majesty.

In the tenth century hagiographers of early martyr kings such as Abbo of Fleury set a new trend in setting up secular princes as examples of Christian conduct, while the Carolingian mirrors of princes emphasised the sacrality of the king's functions.[68] Iconographic, liturgical and biographical productions of the Saxon Ottonian dynasty increasingly associated the king-emperor with saints and holy objects such as relics, reflecting his sacrality.[69] Illustrations show Otto I and Otto III crowned by the hand of God, and Otto II and his bride Theophanu and Heinrich II and Kunigunde being crowned by Christ.[70] Of these the most dramatic is that of Otto II in the Gospel Book of Aachen (c. 973), in which he appears as a colossal figure in the pose of Christ in Majesty, head elevated into heaven and surrounded by a mandorla, venerated by other high-ranking men.[71] Of the emperors only Heinrich II became a saint himself, although not until the twelfth century, but there were many saints in the families of the Ottonian emperors. Sanctity was now becoming hereditary. Ruotger, biographer of Archbishop Bruno of Cologne, brother of Otto I, emphasised the holiness of the women who surrounded Liudolf, father of the dynasty, including his wife and daughter, and Hrotsvit of Gandersheim wrote of the saintly qualities of Otto's first wife Edith, herself supposedly descended from the Northumbrian St Oswald.[72] The queens of Heinrich I and Otto I, Mathilde († 968)

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[67] Sigismund in 523 and Guntram (561–93).
[68] See, for instance, Nelson 1994 pp. 52–87.
[69] For instance, the works of Liudprand of Cremona.
[70] Dodwell 1993 pp. 307–11.
[71] See the discussion of this in Kantorowicz 1997 pp. 61–78.
[72] See Ruotger, Vita Brunonis [ed. Schmeidler] and *Carmen de Gestis Oddonis Imperatoris* in Hrotsvit of Gandersheim [ed. Wilson] pp. 101–07. See also Corbet 1986.

and Adelheid († 999), were similarly endowed with sanctity in their *Lives*.[73] Queens have a special place in the early history of hagiography, having taken precedence over kings as subjects as early as the Merovingian Period, when several acted as agents in converting their husbands to the new religion, presumably being more suitable subjects for sainthood than their husbands, since less violence was required of them in their day-to-day duties.

Following the cult of Václav, in the eleventh century a series of kings acquired cults and were later designated 'blessed' or became 'saints', among them Edward the Confessor of England, Vladimir of Russia, István of Hungary and Olaf of Norway. Neither István nor Vladimir was martyred, but they were credited with the Christianisation of their peoples, and, more than that, acquired saintly characteristics in the exercise of power during their lifetimes. Like many of his successors, István was wise and learned, patronised pilgrims and championed the poor, while Vladimir was characterised as a thirteenth apostle.[74] The lives of royal saints were used by their successors to promote their image and connections with the divine, but also provided a model (not always convenient) for kings to follow, or for churchmen to castigate them.

The new cults of Europe owed much to cultural borrowing from neighbouring kingdoms mediated by dynastic and ecclesiastical contacts. Among others, László had the example of the canonisation of the Kievan Russian Boris and Gleb and of Václav (who had already taken his place on Bohemian coins) for the canonisation of members of the Hungarian royal family, and of St Adalbert, claimed by both Polish and Bohemian monarchies, for the canonisation of Bishop Gerard, first martyr of the Hungarian Church. The Swedish cult of Erik (reigned c. 1156–60) had forebears in Scandinavia itself, especially those of Olaf and the Danish Knuds. Olaf Haraldsson was killed at Stiklestad in Trøndelag in 1030, during an attempt to retake the kingship. There were pagans and Christians on both sides in the battle, but his championing of conversion and his unfortunate death made him a martyr.

During the reign of Sven Estridsen (1047–76), Adam of Bremen gives a hint that the Christianiser of Denmark, Harald Bluetooth,

[73] Two *Lives* of Mathilde are extant, one of Adelheid: Gilsdorf [ed. and tr.] 2004.
[74] In the *Legendae Stephani*: see Klaniczay 2000 pp. 136–37.

was represented as a near saint (as 'just' and 'saintly'), probably in part a response to the Olaf cult in Norway, in part to the loss of Knud the Great's empire. Sven's second son Knud (II) gained the throne in 1080, and died six years later at the hands of a rabble in the church of St Alban in Odense, unprotected, it seems, by the relics of the saint which he had installed there. Resentment at Knud's taxation may have been the most important cause of his death, but this soon turned to resentment against his brother, Oluf Hunger, as a period of famine followed, and contributed to the rise of a cult of the murdered king. Oluf's successor Erik Ejegod and his brother Niels supported the cult and Knud was subsequently presented in his *Passio* as a champion of the Christian church, challenger of the power of the mighty and protector of the rights of strangers. But in 1131 Niels's son Magnus, designated his successor, murdered Knud Lavard, who would have succeeded his uncle Niels. This Knud too became a saint, his cult fostered by his son and the eventual victor in the power struggles of the mid-twelfth century, Valdemar I (1154/7–82). Both cults were promoted by English churchmen, the former by Aelnoth of Canterbury, the latter by Robert of Ely, who lived in Ringsted monastery, Knud Lavard's burial place. In Sweden too English missionaries and churchmen had a powerful influence

How much any of these saints' cults owed to 'folklore' or pagan tradition is a subject of much debate. In a general sense, medieval hagiography probably inherited something from the heroic warrior tales of the pagan past, in that saints assumed heroic characteristics because of the necessity to appeal to people in a way that they could understand. However, the majority, if not all, of the motifs which appear in the *legendae*, can be more easily attributed to biblical example than to pagan ideas, which are in any case difficult to uncover. Motifs connected with fertility or the origin of the king-sacral ruler as a ploughman or herdsman appear in some chronicles, but not in the *legendae*, which may even have been designed to supplant these tales. In his legend, after the Swedish St Erik's death a spring welled up where his blood was spilled. The origin of this motif as evidence for martyrdom is uncertain, but it may owe much to the idea of purity, while springs featured in both biblical tales and pagan cults. As in the case of all political saints, miracles associated with Erik began after his death. It has also been argued that Olaf's axe may be the successor to the hammer, supposedly the favoured weapon of Thor, but martyr saints were often associated with the weapon

believed to have killed them.[75] In recently Christianised Scandinavia, where most royal saints' legends were written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a period when saints became increasingly military, some correlation between pagan cult sites and saints' cults has been shown. However, any direct link between the rise of the knight-saint in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and ancient 'pagan' ideology connected with the function of the ruler as warrior is impossible to prove.

The short legend of St Erik contains many similarities to other legends. Like his royal saintly predecessors Erik led an exemplary life:

> He followed the example of the Old Testament kings: firstly he built churches and improved and lengthened the service, then he devoted himself to ruling the people and spreading law and justice, and finally he battled against the enemies of the faith and of the realm . . . Therefore he travelled his realm and visited all of the people, travelling the *via regia*. Without allowing himself to deviate or to look to left or right, seeking neither favour or gift, and suffering neither fear nor hate he unshakingly followed the correct path which led to the Father.[76]

The *via regia*, the royal path, can be traced back to the Old Testament, but the concept was expanded in theological works written for Charlemagne, especially that produced in c. 810 by Abbot Smaragdus in Aachen.[77] This is one of many texts advising kings on how to lead the Christian life. Above all, they emphasise that the ruler's virtues should include wisdom, prudence, justice and mercy. The basis for this is love of God, clemency and humility. St Erik is similarly described in his legend as merciful and righteous, humble, frugal but generous to the poor and charitable to the unfortunate. Among other things, the king 'gave peace to three men, who had not committed outrages'. These 'Christian' acts had become part of

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[75] See, for instance, Nyberg 1992 pp. 63–70.

[76] See 'Erik den heliges legend på latin, fornsvenska och modern svenska', in Thordemann [ed.] 1954 pp. ix–xx.

Invitatus namque sanctorum veteris testamenti regum exempla primo ad edificacionem ecclesiarum et divini cultus reparacionem ac amplacionem deinde ad populi regimen et legum iusticie promulgacionem. Postremo ad hostium fidei et regni expugnacionem . . . Deinde regnum suum circuiens ac populum visitans universum via regia incedens nec ad dexterum declinans favore vel precio nec ad sinistram deflecens timore vel odio tramite recto qui ducit ad patriam.

[77] Eberhardt 1977. See II Kings 22.2 in the Old Testament, speaking of Josia following David's path.

the good king's duties. *Via regia* is the path on earth that leads to heaven.

The parallels between biblical passages, Smaragdus's *Via Regia*, Erik's legend and the (fourteenth-century) text of Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* are clear.[78] All involve following the route without looking to right or left, in other words, without villainy. Smaragdus refers to prisoners of war or slaves in the same way as the three who are given peace in the *landslag* and *Upplandslagen*.[79] Through the leading of a pious life and through giving this expression in practical acts according to the Bible the prince may help to bring about the peace of God; he must serve God and build churches, he must guide his people and institute good laws, and he must battle against the enemies of the realm and his throne. In the words of the legend, *Imitatus namque sanctorum Veteris Testamenti regum exempla*.[80] Among those who have researched the origin of the *eriksgata* are some who have suggested that it also had a cultic or religious origin as a Swedish representation of the *via regia*, even that the meaning of *eriksgata* was 'the path of the absolute ruler'.[81] The Erik of *eriksgata* would thus take a prominent place in the king's inauguration, perhaps as forebear to all Sweden's kings in a similar way that Olaf had become for Norwegian kings, but there can be no certainty that *eriksgata* was thought of in this way.

A similar concept to the *Via Regia* is expressed in a number of twelfth-century sources from neighbouring kingdoms, including a letter from Knud VI of Denmark to Valdemar, Bishop of Sleswig, written in 1187:

> So we are placed as leader of the whole realm by the Almighty . . . He, who has given us the sceptre of royal majesty and bequeathed us the staff of the realm, a staff for the punishment of those who do evil, but for the rewarding of those who do good, so that the righteous can be protected, so they do not succumb to unrighteous oppression, and so that those who have lost their way can thus be led on to the right path, so that they do not, turning away from the king's road as the recalcitrant shall, deviate to left or to right and therefore fall by the wayside.[82]

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[78] For instance, see IV Moses 21.21–22.
[79] Eberhardt 1977 pp. 592–95, 661.
[80] 'And thus following the example of the Old Testament kings'.
[81] Holmblad 1993 pp. 9–12.
[82] DD I:3.143.

The *Via Regia* thus has both religious and moral implication and something more concrete, a method of rule, in Sweden possibly equated with a concrete act, the *eriksgata*, as in the Legend of St Erik. The author of the St Erik legend need not, of course, have been familiar with the writings of Smaragdus; more immediate inspiration is likely to have been drawn from other legends of royal saints. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century Swedish kings and churchmen were certainly familiar with legends of foreign martyr kings. One of these was the English St Edmund, some of whose relics were installed in Uppsala.[83] Like Erik, he had followed the *via regia*:

> In fact he tempered the shrewdness characteristic of the serpent's cleverness with the mildness of the dove's simplicity in such a way that he was not taken in by the deceitful pretence of the ancient enemy, nor did he unjustly accept the opinions of ill disposed people, while he most carefully enquired into any matter of which he knew nothing; and walking along the royal path he neither turned aside to the right by exalting himself for his good qualities, nor [turning] to the left by succumbing to the vices of human weakness. He was also generously bountiful to the needy, [he was] the kindest father to orphans and widows . . .[84]

Cum tocius regni provisores a cunctipotente creatore [simus institute merito ingrate nomen incurrissimus si sancte ecclesie utilitatibus dominique ministrorum proteccionibus a quo omnia possidemus per quem vivimus et sumus sumopere ceterisque negociis diligencius non intendissemus] qui nobis ceptrum regie concessit magestatis virgam commisit regni virgam directionis ad vindictam malefactorum laudem vero bonorum iusti ut ea protegantur ne iniustis succumbant opressionibus distorti ut ea dirigantur ne a via regia exorbitantes ad dextram declinent seu ad sinistram obstinate nec ea conterantur.

See also Haastrup and Evegang 1987 p. 123. On the *Via Regia*, see, for instance, Sjöberg 1983 pp. 252–260 (p. 255).

[83] DS 3839. See also *Vallentuna Anno Domini 1198: vallentunakalendariet och dess tid*, ed. by Staffan Helmfrid and with a translation and commentary by Gunilla Björkvall, Vallentuna Kulturnämnds skriftserie, 12 (Vallentuna: Vallentuna Kulturnämnd, 1998), p. 56.

[84] Abbo, *Life of St Edmund*, in Three Lives of English Saints [ed. Winterbottom.] pp. 70–71.

Siquidem ita columbinae simplicitatis mansuetudine temporavit serpentinae callidi/tatis astutum ut nec antiqui hostis deciperetur simulatione fraudulente, nec malignorum hominum reciperit contra institutiam sententias, rem quam nescietut diligentissime investigans; gradiensque via regia nec declinabat ad dexterum, extollende sede meritis, nec de sinistram, succumbendo vitiis humanae fragilitatis.

I am indebted to Nicola Robertson, who was researching her thesis, 'Sanctity in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Hagiography: Wulfstan of Winchester's *Vita Sancti Æthelwoldi* and Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Vita Sancti Oswaldi*' (Leeds: unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2003) at the same time as mine, for this translation.

Comparison can also be drawn between the phrases 'vulnera vulneribus ingeminant' and 'vulnera vulneribus imprimebant', referring to the deaths of St Erik and St Edmund respectively. Otherwise there are no obvious direct borrowings in Erik's legend, although much of it is formulaic.

In other respects Erik follows the example of St Olaf. Both were supposedly lawgivers, and as such Erik appears alongside Birger Jarl and Magnus Ladulås in the Prologue to *Upplandslagen*, and in the same code's *Ärvdabalk*, as the giver of laws concerning marriage. The latter, of course, were holy laws, given by King Erik 'in the name of the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.[85] Erik does not appear as lawgiver in *Östgötalagen*, *Södermannalagen* or *Dalalagen*, arguably because his cult was not promoted as much in these *land* as in Uppland or Västergötland. Like Olaf, Erik died on the battlefield, falling without pain and passing from battle to peace. There are differences: as represented in his legend, Olaf's enemies may have been pagans, while Erik's were Danes (as a threat to civilisation possibly not far removed in the eyes of contemporary Swedes), but the followers of both their opponents were 'muneribus corrupti'.

Despite the popularity of Danish saints in Sweden, there are less obvious similarities between the legend of Erik and those of the Danish Knuds. The first Knud may resemble Erik in character, but dies in church, on his knees and with arms outstretched in the form of a cross. Whether on the battlefield or in church, royal saints such as Erik are frequently warned of their fate, but face death without fear, since they have chosen the heavenly kingdom rather than that on earth. There was no single model for the legend of St Erik, and this should come as no surprise, given the widespread contacts between nobility and churchmen throughout Europe.[86]

If Erik's legend is more likely to have been influenced by English, Norwegian and Danish examples, the circumstances surrounding his canonisation bear more similarity to those of the Hungarian St István, whose canonisation occurred against a background of dynastic rivalry between the heirs of András I and Béla I, and was brought about

[85] UL 3.

[86] Despite the learned nature of his argument, Einar Carlsson's attempt to date the legend on the basis of a series of comparisons with other saints' legends, and his conclusion that the Erik legend was first written in the 1170s, seem unconvincing. See Einar Carlsson 1944 pp. 121–29.

through the initiative of King László in 1083.[87] It was undoubtedly designed to strengthen László's position as king, just as Erik's cult assisted Knut Eriksson, who had seized the throne from Karl Sverkersson.[88]

The growth of the Erik legend is difficult to trace. It is usually assumed that his cult grew up spontaneously in Uppland, aided by the death of the king near its religious centre, Uppsala. Although it had become the norm since the late tenth century to ask for the endorsement of the Pope and the Synod of the Church in Rome for any canonisation, before the pontificate of Innocent III a cult was accepted if it had the endorsement of the local Church.[89] In medieval Europe innumerable local cults grew up spontaneously around people who died while answering a religious calling. Many were local 'holy men' (or women) such as ascetics, but even outsiders who died while on pilgrimage were candidates.[90] Once royal families had acquired an air of sacrality their members too might become local objects of veneration if they were perceived as having been martyred. In fact proclamation by the populace that those with royal blood who had suffered a violent death were saints was almost the norm by the thirteenth century. Even kings who had seemingly been unpopular or failures during their lifetimes, such as Edward II of England, were regarded by some as saints after their death. In Sweden a local cult grew up around Holmger Knutsson after his beheading in 1248, centred on his grave in Sko nunnery. The textile covering of his grave, dated to the fifteenth century because of its needlework and the surrounding pattern of pomegranates, is considered a copy of an earlier thirteenth-century one on the basis of the script, the style of the figure and the thirteenth-century shields.[91]

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[87] Géza I had seized the throne from the legitimate king, Salomon, with the aid of his brother László, who succeeded Géza as king. Ironically, all of these kings were descended from Vazul, cousin and rival to István in his lifetime. See Kostolnyik 1981. Four other saints were canonised at the same time as István. Two were almost certainly already spontaneous cults, but, as in the case of István himself, there is no evidence that there was any cult of Emery (István's successor) and Bishop Gerard (first martyr of the Hungarian church, whose legends appear in two forms, the *Maior* and *Minor Legendas*) before László invented one. Whether these canonisations were authorised by Rome, as claimed by later sources, is unknown.

[88] Klaniczay 2000 pp. 123–31.

[89] Vauchez 1997 pp. 146–48.

[90] See, for instance, Vauchez 1997 pp. 190–93.

[91] See Svanberg 1988 pp. 91–93 and fig. 50. The cloth is now in the State Historical Museum, Stockholm.

On either side of a full-figure depiction of Holmger are two minuscule letters, B (*beatus*) and O (*Olmgerus*).[92] Below him are two shields with the arms of the *Erikska ätten* and *Folkungaätten*. Holmger holds the sword of martyrdom, and a crown hovers over his head. He does not wear it as his ancestor St Erik and his father Knut Långe had, an interesting reflection of his failure to attain it.

Many scholars assumed that papal endorsement for canonisations was required by the mid-twelfth century, on the basis of a letter which Pope Alexander III (1159–81) sent to Knut Eriksson, which objected to the local cult of an unnamed saint, but André Vauchez has shown that this was not in fact the case. Alexander III's letter is nevertheless evidence of growing scrutiny by Rome, also reflected in the increasing number of records of papal legates at canonisation ceremonies during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In part this scrutiny resulted from increasing papal alarm at the growth and use of royal saints' cults to increase the sacral standing of secular rulers, alarm which had been shown as early as the pontificate of Gregory VII (1073–85) during his dispute with Heinrich IV.[93]

Alexander's letter has had an important place in debate about the origin of the Erik cult, as several scholars assumed that it referred to Erik.[94] The extant version of the letter is dated 6 July but without a year, and survives in its full form only in the *Registrum ecclesie Lincopensis*. Much of it also appears in *Cotton 1 Collectio decretalium* ('Audivimus') in the British Library, but here without the address to the king and other Swedish people. The full version is addressed to a King K. of the *svear* and *götar*, the bishops, the jarl (*dux*), all the clergy and the people of Götaland. The bull stresses that the bishop of Rome has the last say in church matters, listing six concerns, of which unlawful saints' cults in the land to which he writes is the last. He goes on to say that one among them is a man who died while drunk, although the apostle (Paul) stated that a drunkard shall not inhabit the kingdom of God.[95] Despite the attention this has received, there is no indication that Alexander was stating that all saints' cults should have papal sanction, as Clemens III later stated

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[92] The dropping of initial H before a vowel was common in latinisation of names during this period.

[93] See, for instance, Vauchez 1997 pp. 165–66.

[94] See Einar Carlsson 1949.

[95] I Corinthians 6:10.

in a letter of c. 1200. Clemens's *Audivimus* found its way into a collection which had general authority in 1206, and finally into the Decretals of 1234.

The probable date of the letter is the years 1171–72, very likely the same period when Alexander sent a letter to the Scandinavian kings, also from Tusculanum, appealing for a mission to Estonia. The inspiration for this may have come from Archbishop Eskil, whose close friend Abbot Peter of Rheims worked closely with the Pope. In the early twentieth century many scholars assumed that Alexander referred to St Erik, and the king K. was Knut Eriksson, despite the complete absence of any evidence that Erik died while drunk. Several scholars nevertheless suggested that the K. of the letter might be Kol, the rebel connected to the *Sverkerska ätten*.[96] The saint, in this case, would be one promoted as a *Sverkerska ätten* rival to Erik, obviously favoured by his son Knut of the *Erikska ätten*. Possibly, the argument goes, Kol and his adherents appealed to the Pope for recognition of their saint. Unfortunately there is no evidence for this, nor any known candidate for any *Sverkerska ätten* cult. Sverker himself, according to the *Västgötalagen* king list, was murdered on his way to a morning service on Christmas Day, which might have qualified him for a local cult, but none is known of.[97] As noted in chapter 3, little is known of Kol, or of how successful he may have been. Knut was probably the king of the Pope's letter, but it cannot be ruled out that K. was Kol, or that it referred to an unknown cult of a member of either royal family.

Two suggestions fit well with the content of the letter. Beckman argued that the cult of Harald Gille, who was murdered while asleep in bed with his mistress Tora in 1136, might have spread from Norway, especially as his daughter Brigida was married to Birger Brosa.[98] Another possibility, proposed by Ahnlund, is that the drunken saint was Knud Magnussen. His murder occurred in 1157 against the background of an uneasy (and very short-lived) division of the Danish kingdom between him, Sven Eriksen and Valdemar Knudsen. The agreement on division was celebrated with a two-day (three-day,

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[96] For instance, Tunberg 1941 pp. 231–54.

[97] A so-called Sverker chapel at Alvastra may or may not have originated as something to do with Sverker.

[98] N. Beckman 1912; Snorri Sturluson tells of the cult, Saxo mentions only the event: SSH, *Magnúss saga Blinda og Haralds Gilla* 16, p. 763.

if Helmold is to be believed) feast at Roskilde.[99] It seems that large amounts of alcohol were consumed in the evenings, and on the last, the day before the feast of St Laurentius, Sven murdered Knud. Both Sven Aggesen and *Knytlinga saga* say that Knud was declared a saint by the local people, as do several foreign sources, although Saxo says nothing of it, possibly following the line of the Church, which attempted to suppress the cult.[100] This opposition adds weight to the argument that the 'saint' in Alexander's letter is Knud, perhaps also that the letter was a response to representations from Archbishop Eskil. Saxo is also witness to a solemn undertaking that had earlier been made by the Danes to observe a strict fast on three days of the year, of which the night before St Laurentius's day was one.[101] The circumstances of Knud's death do not fit well with this undertaking. Nor would Valdemar I have been enthusiastic about the cult; Knud had been a rival to him, and he was also more interested in promoting the cause of his own father, Knud Lavard, who was canonised in 1169 with Alexander III's support. The suppression of Knud Magnussen's cult appears to have been largely successful, since no more is heard of it in Danish sources after the early fourteenth century.[102] However, it was very likely during the period when it must have flourished that Alexander's letter was sent to K., king of the *svear* and *götar*.

The cult of Knud Magnussen certainly spread to Sweden, and his death and martyrdom (wrongly dated to 1156) are mentioned in *Annales 266–1430* and *916–1430*, their source probably the same. The earlier *Annales 916–1263* say nothing of martyrdom, noting only the deaths of Knud and Sven (in the correct year, 1157). This may be a reflection of the origin of the annals, in Svealand, where the cult of Knud was weak. Knud was son of Magnus Nielsen, grandson of Inge the Elder. Furthermore, Knud had strong connections with the Sverker family, since Magnus's widow Rycheza married

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[99] See Saxo 14:18, pp. 406–407; Knytlinga saga 113–114, p. 290; SMHD 1:2, p. 2, *Svenonois Aggonis Filii Opus ala Historica* 16, p. 137; Helmold, pp. 165–68.

[100] Knytlinga saga 114. The suppression seems to have been successful, since no more is heard of it in Danish sources after the early fourteenth century.

[101] Saxo 13:2, p. 112.

[102] As a result of all this Roskilde lacked its own saint, but this was corrected in 1178 when it became the centre for the cult of Margrete, established by her relative, Bishop Absalon. Knud Magnussen's illegitimate son Niels, who may have fostered his father's cult, died in 1180. See Ahnlund 1945 pp. 307–08.

Sverker after Magnus's death in 1134, and Knud himself married Sverker's daughter Helena shortly before he was killed. When Knud was defeated (several times) he fled to Sweden, where he had inherited land. Because of this association we should expect that Knut Eriksson of Sweden would also have been opposed to his cult—Knud had the posthumous misfortune not only to have died in unfortunate circumstances that hindered his cult from prospering, but to be an enemy of two kings in Denmark and Sweden, both of whom had long reigns. As an explanation of why Alexander III addressed the people of Götaland and not Svealand, Ahnlund suggested that Götaland was where the cult prospered in Sweden, especially Västergötland, where Skara's catalogue of saints resembled that of Lund more than Uppsala up to the mid-twelfth century. Östergötland was the *Sverkerska ätten* homeland, and Ingegärd Sverkersdotter († 1204), sister of Knud's queen, was prioress of Vreta near Linköping during Knut Eriksson's reign, so the cult may also have prospered there.

That Erik's legend existed in some form in Knut Eriksson's reign is evident from the *Vallentunadiariet*, written c. 1198.[103] In connection with Sverre's marriage to Margareta, *Sverris saga* mentions her father Erik Jedvardsson, king and saint, and his shrine at Uppsala in Svitjod.[104] The saga was probably written in c. 1220. In common with many other royal saints' cults, a local cult may have grown up around Uppsala shortly after Erik's death, but the most likely period for a shrine to appear alongside the first version of a legend would be the first years of Knut Eriksson's reign, probably with the support of Archbishop Stefan. Sjöberg believes the earliest legend must have been written by the 1180s in Uppsala.[105] The wall paintings of Eriksberg church in Skara diocese and a picture of a martyr king on a silver buckle from Öland (see below) provide possible evidence that the cult was promoted throughout Sweden as early as the twelfth century, but there is no evidence that it was already widespread and on the road to becoming the national cult of Sweden by 1200. The earliest extant text of St Erik's legend dates from 1344, and the *Västgötalagen* king list, which refers to his death and martyrdom,

[103] See Vallentuna Diariet pp. 65–92.

[104] Sverris saga 100, p. 107: . . . *oc fece Margretar dottur Eirics Svia-konungs sonar Jatvarðar hins helga. Eiricr hvilir i scrini i Svipioðu at Uppsolum.*

[105] Sjöberg 1984 p. 257.

belongs to the same period. The first references to visits to see Erik's relics were made in 1256 and 1266.[106] In 1256 a bull of Pope Alexander IV granted indulgences to those who visited Erik's grave in Uppsala, and this was renewed in 1266 by Clement IV. The latter bull contains reference to the Uppsala cathedral as the home of Erik's relics and the large crowds that celebrated his mass on 18 May. This is actually the day of Christ's ascension, which was given as the day of Erik's death in his legend. A procession was held at Erik's shrine and miracles were recorded in 1270, and his relics were translated from their old home in Gamla Uppsala to Östra Aros in 1273, the same year, according to the Uppsala diocesan yearbook, when the archbishop moved.[107] The letter of King Valdemar that refers to the translation tells us very little else, not even the name of the church to which the relics went.[108] In 1277 Magnus Ladulås and his queen were present at a mass for Erik in Uppsala.

In this era it is probable that every church contained relics, whether of its founder or acquired from elsewhere. If the nature of Erik's death led to his early veneration it was only natural that his relics should end up in the church of Gamla Uppsala, near the place where he fell, and where, according to the legend, he had celebrated mass beforehand.[109] Sources do not tell us what form his grave took or how early there may have been a shrine. Erik was evidently not a 'national saint' even in the thirteenth century, and many other saint cults are known to have existed. These included earlier foreign missionaries to Sweden such as Sigfrid or the even more obscure Erik 'peregrinus', Scandinavian Christians who died during the conversion process such as Botvid and Eskil, and female founders of churches like Helena of Skövde and Ragnhild of Tälje. The influence

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[106] DS 435, DS 523.

[107] The move of the archbishop may not have been as sudden as the annal suggests. Referring to the relics, *translacio* almost certainly means moved (permanently) rather than carried in procession, for which the verb *deportare* was normally used.

[108] The church was most probably St Erik's in Östra Aros, the later 'new' Uppsala. The new shrine was still within a wooden church (*ecclesia lignea*), inside the new cathedral (which had not yet been completed) in 1290.

[109] The reliquary shrine of St Erik is now in Uppsala Cathedral. Inside it are parts of the skeleton of a man who had suffered severe injuries, including a sword-cut on one of the vertebrae. With the skeleton was a copper crown decorated with glass-bead jewellery, but there is no way of knowing whether it was Erik Jedvardsson's. The church of Uppsala at the time of Erik's death was probably a wooden predecessor to the later stone ones.

of the English brought a number of English cults with it. Alongside that of Knud Magnussen, several other cults spread to Sweden from neighbouring lands, among them those of the Norwegian King Olaf, the Danish Margrete of Ølsemagle, murdered by her husband in 1176, and another member of the Danish royal house, Knud Lavard. The cult of St Laurentius seems to have been especially popular in Sweden, reinforced by the Pope in 1256. Among those saints represented as patrons of the realm in the fourteenth century were Eskil, Botvid, Erik, Elin, Sigfrid, Henrik and Birgitta.

In addition to all these saints, more than one St Erik was venerated in Sweden, since a cult also grew up around the Danish king Erik Plovpenning ('Ploughpenny'), murdered in 1250. It was this Erik after whom Erik Valdemarsson was named. Erik Valdemarsson was also descended from Erik Jedvardsson, but his mother Sofie was Erik Plovpenning's daughter. The circumstances in which the Danish Erik cult spread to Sweden therefore resemble those of Knud Magnussen's. The status of Erik Plovpenning's cult seems to have been particularly strong in Götaland; his miracles appear in the collection of Skara, and miraculous healings associated with him are recorded from the dioceses of Skara, Linköping and Västerås during the 1260s. Birger Jarl visited his shrine in Ringsted in 1261, and later Johannes Ängel was cured of a ten-year old frostbite injury after doing the same. This suggests that the cult had already spread to Uppland, where it is known to have been fostered by the Dominican friars of Sigtuna and Sko. The 'holy king Erik' of *Erikskrönikan* is also Erik Plovpenning.[110] In the popular mind the two St Eriks may frequently have been confused, and it is even possible that the arrival of Sofie and her father Erik Plovpenning's cult in Uppland helped to stimulate interest in that of Erik Jedvardsson. It also seems likely that earlier Erik cults contributed to Erik Jedvardsson's, such as that of the *peregrinus* whose feast day was on May 17, the day before that of St Erik, possibly to be identified with the *Hericus peregrinus* of Adam of Bremen.[111]

The Dominican friary of Sigtuna was probably most responsible for promoting the Erik Jedvardsson cult to a prominent position in the late thirteenth century. On a 1282 seal for the friar Johannes

[110] Ek pp. 46–47.

[111] The name *peregrinus* appeared on May 17 in the *Kalendarium Vallentunense*: see Ahnlund 1954 pp. 110–15.

St Erik appears with sceptre and orb alongside St Laurentius (Lars), who was the oldest patron of the cathedral there. He may also have been the prior of the friary, whose 1287 seal was very similar. Both Johannes and the bishop, Israel Erlandsson (*Ängelätten*) are known to have had a strong interest in the Erik cult. Israel produced a list of Erik miracles, and both must have had a hand in the development of the legend.[112] Before becoming bishop Israel had been a canon at Uppsala cathedral, where a short Erik *officium* already existed in the 1270s. His promotion of the Erik cult probably owed much to the influence of his uncle Folke Johansson, who also wrote down several miracles. The earliest refers to a certain Franciscan friar Roger in Östra Aros, and shortly thereafter to a meeting between Valdemar I and prelates and nobles in Söderköping, which is known to have occurred in 1270.[113] Johannes Ängel, Bishop of Åbo in 1286, may have begun the association of Erik with Henrik, the missionary and possible bishop martyred in Finland. Alongside Magnus Ladulås and Hedwig people from northern Uppland and Jämtland attended the mass for Erik in 1277. This is testimony to the spread of the cult and to the interest of the king, but the extent to which King Valdemar and his successor were otherwise actively involved in its promotion is unknown. It is also notable that virtually all evidence of the Erik cult in this period comes from Svealand. In the late thirteenth century, to the south of Svealand the cult of the Danish St Erik (Plovpenning) was stronger than Erik Jedvardsson's.

If we can judge by evidence from Norway, it was probably in the late thirteenth century, the period when Erik's legend is likely to have reached approximately the form it had in the mid-fourteenth century, that the idea of the *rex iustus* truly penetrated Sweden. The growth of the idea of Christian sacral rulership in Scandinavia is traceable in the Norwegian kings' sagas, especially those of Sverre and Håkon IV, and a 'King's mirror' (*Konungs skuggsjá* or *Speculum regale*, both titles appearing in its prologue) was produced during the reign of Håkon (probably in the 1250s), one of a genre which originated in the Carolingian period.[114] It presents a discussion of the

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[112] See SRS 2, *Miracula Sancti Erici Regis et Martyris*, pp. 278–315. For the *Angelätten* see A. Schück 1942 pp. 135–37.

[113] Ahnlund 1948 p. 314.

[114] The author is unknown. It exists in a number of manuscripts, of which fol. AM 243ß (probably originating in Bergen, 1270s) is considered the best. See Bagge 1987.

king's duties as a *rex iustus*, and also emphasises that the king is above ecclesiastical authorities. As early as 1080–81, in two letters to the Swedish king Inge, Pope Gregory VII had emphasised the king's duty to ensure justice and peace within his realm. Although it has been argued that Inge accepted Gregory's doctrine, in a region where his own power was very limited and Christianity was not fully established he is unlikely to have been overly concerned by the details of Gregory's arguments about the relative authority of secular and sacred powers (*regnum* and *sacerdotium*), even if he acknowledged his duty to promote peace and justice.[115] The same may be said of Sverker I and his immediate successors. The number of complaints about failure to collect the *tionde* and taxation of ecclesiastical properties suggests that kings were either unable or unwilling to enforce what they had promised to successive popes, and it is highly unlikely that developing ideologies of Christian kingship penetrated Sweden more quickly than they did Norway, which was Christianised earlier.

No 'king's mirror' survives from contemporary Sweden, but there are indications that a similar definition of royal functions in Christian terms, worthy to be emulated by the laity, was understood there in the late thirteenth century. There is an echo of the *rex iustus* ideal in *Upplandslagen's* statement that the king 'shall rule over the country and rule the realm, to strengthen the law and maintain the peace'. *Hertig Fredrik*, written in 1308, according to the declaration in the text, was perhaps the closest thing to a 'King's Mirror' to be disseminated in Old Swedish. In this tale the king returns home after many adventures to become a good and pious ruler who cares for his people. Nevertheless, this poem is primarily entertainment, whereas *Konungs skuggsjá* is a dialogue between father-teacher and son-pupil, probably written for the sons of King Håkon, against a background of fifty years of dispute between Norwegian kings and the Church, which had not occurred in Sweden. In *Hákonar saga* Håkon is also represented as a *rex iustus*, and Sturla emphasises repeatedly that the king has been chosen by God. The rule of Håkon's dynasty and his succession are expressions of God's will, and God favours him throughout his career.[116] The picture contrasts with that of Sverre in *Sverris saga*, who is portrayed as a warrior king, without any particular

[115] Hallencreutz 1993a pp. 72–75.
[116] Bagge 1987, 1996.

emphasis on mercy (except occasionally to noble warrior opponents), protection of the poor, or justice. In Theodoricus Monachus' *Historia de antiquitate regum norwagiensium* and Snorri's *Heimskringla* there is constant contrast between 'just' and 'unjust' kings, but the method of description is traditional, with the focus on the individual rather than the dynasty, and little description of 'good government' beyond the traditional chiefly qualities of generosity to followers and leadership in battle.[117]

In the Swedish *Upplandslagen*, codified at the end of the thirteenth century, as in *Hákonar saga*, the king is presented as God's representative on earth. Ideology would naturally find its expression in the administration of justice, emphasised as the king's prerogative. Although the Church had control over many local *härad* courts in *Östgötalagen*, even there ultimate appeal was to the king's courts (the Ljongating, in Östergötland). Culminating in Magnus Eriksson's law code, the law texts demonstrate a continuing attempt to regularise practice and exert control over justice through the king and his agents, the *lagmän* and judges. The king's function as lawmaker is emphasised in the opening passage of *Upplandslagen*:

> God himself administered the first law and sent it to his people through Moses . . . So also Birger, son of King Magnus, who rules the *svear* and *götar*, sends this book which contains Viger's *flockar* and the law of Uppland to all those who live between the sea and Sagån and Ödmården.[118]

Birger Magnusson is equated with Moses, who was 'the *lagman* for his people', as lawgiver on behalf of God. The *Upplandslagen* Prelude looks back to three of Birger's forebears, St Erik, Birger Jarl and his father Magnus Ladulås.[119] The king's laws supersede those of Viger, a mythical pagan lawgiver. Only the king can change the law, but with the help of clever men, in other words, those who served on

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[117] Jakobsson 1997 has argued that the rulership ideology of the kings' sagas, even when referring to pre-Christian rulers, comes from the Augustinian *rex iustus* idea: It would be surprising if the authors of these sagas had not absorbed Christian ideas of *justicia*, but the fact remains, as Bagge 1987 has observed, that there is a clearly discernible difference between their outlook and that of the medieval law codes, the *King's Mirror* and *Hákonar saga*.

[118] UL Preface. Sagån (river) marked the southern boundary between Småland and Blekinge, and Ödmården the northern frontier of Gastrikland.

[119] UL Preface, p. 7: *Ok wilium wir fylghiæ .i. laghum þæmmæ warum forfæþrum. Erikinum hælghæ. Byrghiri iarli. ok magnusi kunungi.*

Tyrgils Knutsson's law commission and *ting*. As in the Pentateuch, the king's subjects are represented as God's folk, and the king acts on God's behalf.

On the face of it the codifiers of the law themselves, those who made up the *nämnd* led by Birger Persson, seem an unlikely source for such ideology, representing as they did the powerful secular nobility of Sweden in a period when Tyrgils Knutsson effectively ruled the kingdom. Nevertheless, regardless of their attitudes to their own rights *vis-à-vis* the king, there is not the slightest evidence that they had any thought of a polity without a king. The way in which medieval people thought of the king is difficult for us to grasp. In every high medieval European kingdom nobles, churchmen and sometimes peasants connived against kings, undermined their authority and occasionally even murdered them, but these were actions against the temporal person, not against the institution of kingship. The king was a human being, but also the embodiment of an institution that guaranteed order, on whose presence the stability of the polity depended. In medieval Europe depositions of kings were often justified by the failure of a king to act as a legitimate sovereign—those who acted as 'tyrants' and became a danger to the realm were equated with false claimants to the throne. However, such was the status of 'tyrant' kings that even dethronements and murders often acquired a ritual character, since they reversed the procedure of investiture (see 11:4 below).

In his *Policraticus* of 1159, John of Salisbury had argued that the prince was the likeness of God and ruled through His will, but was minister to the clergy, exercising the functions that were not worthy of it.[120] To him, the Church was the guardian and representative of divine law and human justice and should therefore lead all mankind. What distinguished a prince from a tyrant was that the former obeyed the law and ruled the people by its dictates, the latter did not. In Chapter 4 it was mentioned that the thirteenth century was a time of intense juridical activity. Following John, theories of kingship and its relationship to the divine had begun to take on a legal aspect. Emperor Friedrich II's *Constitutions*, issued at Melfi in 1231, maintained that it was the emperor who made the law, and in that sense

[120] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus, sive de nugis curialium et de vestigiis philosophorum.*

was above the law, but he was also obligated to protect his people and observe the law, since its purpose was to maintain the order of things created by God.[121] The king was not only the keeper of the laws, but the embodiment of law, the living personification of Justice, which sometimes took on an abstract persona as vicar of God.[122]

The members of Birger Persson's *nämnd* might have related more easily to the views expressed in the English legal treatise known as *Bracton* or *The Laws and Customs of England*, which appeared in the 1230s.[123] 'Bracton' and his predecessor 'Glanvill' emphasised that true laws were made by the king with the counsel of his leading magnates. While closer to Friedrich's view than that of John of Salisbury, *Bracton* argued that the king was both above and subject to the law, but he also emphasised that the king's authority derived from law, so that, as Kantorowicz put it, 'a king-making law and a law-making king mutually conditioned each other . . .'.[124] The king was chosen in order that he might give justice to all, but his power had to be bridled. *Bracton* is not entirely clear about how the bridling should be done, but the task presumably falls upon those the author calls the king's assistants and associates, the *comites*.[125] An anonymous and none-too-sophisticated work written during the reign of Edward I (1272–1307), *The Mirror of Justices*, is less ambiguous on this point—

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[121] The *Constitutions of Melfi* (in Sicily), were issued in Friedrich's capacity as king of that realm. They are sometimes known as the *Liber Augustalis*, but this is a later name, which implies that the laws were primarily a justification of autocratic rule. Much of the work was probably done by the lawyer Piero della Vigna, a close associate of the emperor's. See Stürner 2003 pp. 189–201, Abulafia 1988 pp. 202–14, and for an earlier analysis that puts greater emphasis on the autocratic aspect of the *Constitutions*, without maintaining that this was their primary purpose, Kantorowicz 1997 pp. 99–101.

[122] Emperors were described as father and son of Justice in the same way that they were described by some of their supporters as father and son of the Church. Both Heinrich II and Friedrich II were described as *filius et pater Ecclesiae*: Kantorowicz 1997 p. 100 note 39, p. 131.

[123] *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliae*.

[124] Kantorowicz 1997 p. 155, and on Bracton's work as a whole, pp. 143–164. See also Harding 2002 pp. 145–46. In the words of Bracton, *Ipse autem rex non debet esse sub homine sed sub deo et sub lege, quia lex facit regem*: Bracton Online, hlsl.law.harvard.edu/bracton, vol. 2, p. 33.

[125] The part of *Bracton* that suggests it is the task of the king's court of earls and barons to bridle him is Folio 34, the *Additio de cartis*, once accepted as 'the author's' own addition, but the law in Bracton is that of the 1220s and '30s with various later additions. Henry Bracton himself wrote in the 1250s and '60s. See Bracton, Folio 34.

it is the task of the greatest of the kingdom's nobility, the earls, to ensure that the king governs properly.

How many of the ideas of German, French, English or Italian jurists and philosophers were known in Sweden is uncertain, but it cannot be assumed that they did not reach Sweden in some form simply because there are relatively few contemporary Swedish written sources. By the end of Magnus Ladulås's reign some churchmen had been schooled in European centres of ecclesiastical learning and philosophy, not least Magnus's close associate Brynolf Algotsson, Bishop of Skara from 1278, who spent many years in Paris. The sources from which the Swedish law-codes were derived were largely the same as those that provided the basis for the ideology of Friedrich II's *Constitutions*, a mixture of Roman Law, especially the law-codes of Justinian, canon law and earlier medieval laws, although the influence of the (then) newly fashionable Aristotle is also clear in Friedrich's laws. Even if they did not attempt to explore the full implications of their assumptions, the members of Birger Persson's *nämnd* accepted that the king was the fount of law and they were his advisors. Earlier law incorporated in *Upplandslagen* is attributed to St Erik and Magnus Ladulås, but also Birger Jarl, who was not a king, but presumably acquired a special status as *dux* and father of the dynasty. However, it is the king at the time of the codification, Birger Magnusson, who is explicitly compared to Moses, who received his laws directly from God.

By the age of Emperor Friedrich and Erik Eriksson, who died in the same year, only the pope was termed 'vicar of Christ', but a century earlier kings had been called this. Thirteenth-century theories of the king's dual nature had themselves developed from earlier Christological concepts of rulership, in which the king also acted as mediator between heaven and earth. Even before the consolidation of Christianity in Sweden, European kings were depicted in Christ-like poses, sometimes also with Christ-like features. In the iconographic representation of Otto II on the frontispiece of the Aachen Gospels, referred to above, the emperor's feet touch the earth, but his head is in heaven.[126] This depiction may be exceptional, in that

[126] Kantorowicz 1997 pp. 61–64. The emperor of Byzantium, Basil II, was depicted in similar fashion, and both depictions may ultimately derive from Roman and Hellenistic art. Otto II was married to Theophanu, a kinswoman of the Byzantine emperor John Tzimisces. On the development of German depictions of kings and emperors, see Schramm 1983.

the artist may have intended to depict something more than a king, an emperor like the one in Constantinople, whence the ideology of the emperor as Christ reincarnated had arrived in western Europe. However, similar concepts about the dual nature of rulers in general appeared later in writing. Notable among these works is a political-theological tract written in c. 1100 by an anonymous author, probably a Norman cleric, *De consecratione pontificum et regum*. He argued that, just as the anointed kings of the Old Testament foreshadowed Christ, so the anointed kings of medieval Europe imitated him on earth. The tract was a determined defence of a king's spirituality in the light of the investiture contest, in a period when papal theologians who supported Gregory VII were arguing that the *regnum* was subject to the *sacerdotium* and should have no authority over the Church. According to the Norman's theory, just as Christ had a dual nature, so did the king: the one a human nature and the other a divine nature acquired by virtue of grace. In the former the king was indistinguishable from others, but in the latter the king excelled them. Through consecration and anointing the king became an impersonator of Christ and representative of God during his stay on earth.

Although he may have taken his dual-nature analogies to exceptional lengths, the views of the Norman Anonymous were a carefully constructed extension of some contemporary thinking. The papal doctrine of the separation of temporal and spiritual powers had developed in the context of the collapse of imperial authority in western Europe, but the revival of a western *imperium* in its Carolingian and Ottonian guise also led to the revival of the ruling emperor's claims to be more than the guardian of one kingdom. The open disputes between popes and secular rulers that began with that of Gregory VII and Heinrich IV gave extra impetus to the development of a pro-royal 'political theology' that emphasised the ruler's direct connection with God as never before. Many clergy who served royal masters adopted some of these views, without necessarily exploring their full implications or going to the same lengths as the Norman in promoting his divine nature. One example was Abbot Suger of St Denis (1081–1151), advisor to the French kings Louis VI and Louis VII and regent of the kingdom during the latter's crusade, who glorified the role of the king as God's representative on earth.[127]

[127] Abbot Suger has been called 'the father of the French monarchy', but his

However, the attitude of royal clerks such as Suger to the relative powers of church and king may not have been very different from that of Hincmar of Rheims in the ninth century, who did so much to promote the sacred nature of the king's (in this case, Charles the Bald's) office, but in so doing was probably endeavouring to exert ecclesiastical influence over royal actions. Many leading twelfth- and thirteenth-century churchmen known from Scandinavian sources were also in this tradition, Eskil being a prime example; they were prepared to give ecclesiastical endorsement, and hence support to a sacral foundation to royal power, but wanted influence and the freedom of ecclesiastical properties and offices from royal jurisdiction in return.

It is not suggested that the nobility, or even the clergy, of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sweden were familiar with the work of the Norman or Suger, any more than they need have been familiar with the work of Smaragdus. Nor is there any written evidence from Scandinavia that the king was thought of as Christ enthroned on earth, either in the twelfth century, or in Erik Jedvardson's legend or *Hákonar saga*. Nevertheless, the work of some proponents of the king's spiritual status was probably known of throughout Europe. In his fourteenth-century legend Erik is compared with the Old Testament kings, an idea that would have been fully comprehensible in twelfth-century mainland Europe, or for that matter Byzantium. Iconographic evidence of the king's semi-divine status is also lacking in Sweden, but there is one interesting example of an imperial-style painting from Eriksberg church in the diocese of Skara. Unfortunately the church fell into disrepair after the construction of the new church in the nineteenth century, and the wall paintings were whitewashed in c. 1900, but photographs survive. Tradition holds that the church was founded by Erik Jedvardsson in the 1150s and completed by his son, Knut Eriksson, possibly the instigator of the painting. According to one dendrochronological dating the church must already have been standing in 1153.[128] To judge by its scale and style, its builder

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influence has been exaggerated. His primary purpose in writing *De Consecratione* and *The Deeds of Louis the Fat* was to secure a pre-eminent place for his monastery and the cult of St Denis, and kings were glorified because he associated the abbey with them. See Grant 1998.

[128] Hernfjäll 1993, pp. 29–30.

certainly had ambitions, and it may have been partially inspired by the cathedral in Lund.[129]

Fragments of some Romanesque murals, which Viola Hernfjäll dates to c. 1170, show a king extending a sceptre towards an angel (cherub?) with four wings hovering over the triumphal arch. The latter is positioned directly above the arch before the chancel vault, the entrance to the holiest place. There are ten steps that appear to lead to the door of paradise, and the mural contains both a king and Christ in Majesty. In the middle of the arch are four female figures, interpreted by Hernfjäll as Justitia, Fortitudo, Prudentia and Temperentia. As early as 1897 the king figure (positioned to the right of the arch) was interpreted as St Erik, perhaps indicated by the four virtues (i.e. a good king). The figure is beardless and conforms to other early depictions which have been interpreted as Erik, one on a silver buckle from Hallnäs on Öland, one (now lost) from the old church of Hjälmseryd and one from a late twelfth-century bracteate, probably minted in Uppsala.[130] Hernfjäll believes that a more damaged figure to the left of the arch is also a king, although the crown is less clear. The most likely identification would be St Olaf, since Knut Eriksson had close connections with Norway, his daughters Margareta and Katarina being married to King Sverre and Niels Blaka respectively and his jarl's son Filip becoming Sverre's jarl. However, in iconography both Olaf and Knud are frequently found together with Erik.

The 'Erik figure' holds a sceptre in his right hand and a cross-decorated object in his right, which he stretches out towards the angels which guard Paradise, perhaps receiving power from God, as suggested in the letter of Knud VI quoted above. The steps leading to the gate of Paradise could represent the *Via Regia*. Hernfjäll compares the Erik figure to a wall painting of Heinrich V of Germany in Prüfening church near Regensburg, dated to c. 1150, but draws many other comparisons between the art of Eriksberg and French, German or English examples, many ultimately derived from Byzantine art.[131] Some of the inspiration may have come, as might be expected, via the intermediary of Danish church paintings, such as those of

[129] E. Lundberg 1940 p. 320.
[130] See Thordemann 1954 pp. 202–05 and figure 130, and Sjöberg 1984 p. 253.
[131] Dodwell 1993 pp. 317–18.

Christ in majesty accompanied by figures on either side in Sæby and Hagestad churches, both in Sjælland, but these are approximately contemporary.[132] The influence, possibly work, of the Benedictines has been postulated in a number of Romanesque churches in Sweden, including St Erik's church in Gamla Uppsala and Eriksberg. Gallén held that St Erik's was founded by Knut Eriksson, and was connected with a Benedictine monastery. Nyberg has taken the argument further, suggesting that the probable origin of these monks would have been Odense, which had strong connections with English tradition as well as being the centre of the cult of St Knud.[133] Skara too had strong English and Danish connections, English saints taking a prominent place in the earliest yearbooks and its bishop Bengt the Good, a contemporary of Knut Eriksson, recorded as possessing an English bible. Hernfjäll speculates further that both Bengt and Erik Jedvardsson's wife, Christine, may have had a hand in the decoration of the church at Eriksberg, based in part on her alleged favouring of the Benedictines.[134]

Like most contemporary saints, Erik was a warrior knight as well as a benefactor of the poor and keeper of peace within his own lands. If his legend achieved roughly the form in which we know it at the time of the translation of his relics, it did so in an age when saints had become increasingly militant. Shortly after Knut Eriksson became king, in 1165, Charlemagne, already the centre of an imperial cult in which he was primarily represented as a militant knight-saint, was officially promoted to sainthood by the antipope Paschal III (r. 1164–68), at the instigation of Friedrich Barbarossa. Even those gentle saints of the ninth and tenth centuries, Edmund and Václav, had by this time become valiant warriors.[135] As for those who had always been known as warriors, this aspect was increasingly emphasised. Snorri Sturluson's St Olaf is downright ruthless with his enemies, and conforms to this model. Some scholars have chosen to see the Scandinavian image of Christ the victorious

[132] See Dodwell 1993 pp. 317–19, and Bolvig 1999 p. 175.
[133] Gallén 1976 pp. 1–8, Nyberg 2000 pp. 182–84.
[134] Hernfjäll 1993 p. 8.
[135] See, for instance, Grant [ed.] 1978. In this version, written in c. 1200, Edmund issues dire threats to the Vikings. He fights them first, then decides to become a martyr, and carefully instructs them in gory methods with which to torture and kill him! Václav also became a warrior and a deadly foe to his pagan enemies.

warrior-king as a particularly northern phenomenon, closely comparable to the Christ of skaldic poetry. Else Mundal has argued that the terminology used for Viking kings and lesser leaders was adopted for Christ in the mid-twelfth century, and this was inherited in Scandinavian, or at least Norwegian, hagiography.[136] Her arguments are persuasive, but we should remember that most hagiography in Scandinavia was written in precisely the period when the knight-saint was in vogue throughout western and central Europe. As noted earlier, this was also the period when chivalric ideals were clearly being adopted by many among the Swedish nobility.

Twelfth- and thirteenth-century hagiography drew many of its characteristics from non-hagiographic chivalric tales, such as that of King Arthur as related by Geoffrey of Monmouth. There is no doubt that chivalric romance had reached Sweden by the late thirteenth century—only a few years after the turn of the fourteenth century the Norwegian queen Eufemia commissioned translations of Chrétien du Troyes's *Yvain* (*Le chevalier au lion*), part of the *Chronique des ducs de Normandie* and *Flore et Blancheflor* (as *Herr Ivan*, sometimes referred to as *Ivan Lejonriddaren, Hertig Fredrik* and *Flores och Blanzeflor*) into Old Swedish, almost certainly as a gift to *Hertig* Erik, second son of Magnus Ladulås, after his betrothal to her daughter Ingeborg in 1302.[137] These so-called *Eufemiavisor* (Eufemia poems) were among the influences that led to the writing of the verse chronicle *Erikskrönikan* in c. 1320, just after the accession of Erik's infant son Magnus to the kingship. *Erikskrönikan* is named after *Hertig* Erik Magnusson, its author being unknown, and is a propaganda work for the young king and his ancestors, but it may also be seen as a celebration of the new aristocratic values. Battles are duels between knights, ladies crave the hands of knights, and descriptions of feasting, halls and expensive clothes recur throughout. In its early stages the chronicle relates what may have been no more than an expedition to restore Finnish tribes to tributary status as a holy crusade, and Erik's death is related in terms reminiscent of contemporary hagiography.[138] Erik

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[136] Mundal 1995 pp. 255–268.

[137] The originals may have been French, but the style of the Swedish versions owes more to German *knittel* poetry. The translator may well have used earlier Norwegian translations of *Yvain* and *Floire et Blancheflor* as an aid. See Noreen [ed.] 1931, 1927 and Olson [ed.] 1921. See also V. Jansson 1945.

[138] *Erikskrönikan* is the only evidence for this 'second crusade' to Finland, although

refuses to turn back on the road to Nyköping when warned of the danger ahead, accepts his fate and prevents his brother from fighting when they are trapped in the castle hall, and finally commends himself to God once he realises that they are to be starved to death in their prison tower.

No doubt one important influence for the *Erikskrönikan* poet's Erik Magnusson was St Erik himself. If the nature (possibly even occurrence) of the 'second crusade' of the rhyme chronicle is doubtful, that of the 'first crusade' of the St Erik legend, which may have provided the inspiration for the *Erikskrönikan* author, is still more so.[139] But the Erik of the thirteenth-century legend was a saint of his time, and it is through this crusade against 'the enemies of the faith' that he is shown as not only a holy ruler, but a chivalric knight. Iconography reflects both traditions, Erik with and without armour and sword. The earliest representation of Erik on a seal comes from the contraseal of Uppsala cathedral in 1275, in which he appears as a half-figure holding a lily sceptre in one hand and an orb in the other. The text says SANCTUS ERICUS REX ET MARTIR. This is very much a conventional king picture, similar to those appearing on Knut Eriksson's coins, that owes its origin to German eleventh-century examples. Seals retained this pattern throughout the fourteenth century, although the Erik on the Johannes seal mentioned above is a full figure. The earliest known picture of Erik is a stained glass painting from Gamla Uppsala, which is reminiscent of the seals. Erik appears more frequently as a warrior in statues, but the vast majority belong to the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They are not easily distinguishable from images of St Olaf and St Knud. Often two of these saints appear together, or even all three, as in Fogdö church in Södermanland. Erik is usually beardless and often holds a sword, whereas Olaf usually has an axe, and a lily sceptre.[140]

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it should be noted that it does not use the word 'crusade'. As a result the scale of the expedition, its purpose, who led it, its date, and whether there was any fighting, are all uncertain. See Chapter 12:3.

[139] See Suvanto 1987.

[140] Thordeman 1954 pp. 174–76 and plate 21.

11.4. *Rituals of ruling*

Ritual behaviour was ever present in medieval life, serving to establish the relationship and status of whoever was present in a given situation. Social activity was marked by many actions whose meaning was understood to all those present. Before any meeting took place the friendly intent of those who took part was usually indicated before a word was spoken, while a variety of actions could indicate submission, and inferior or superior social standing. The way in which people attended banquets was strictly ordered according to rank, and guests were addressed, seated and given gifts appropriate to their station. Although many of the instances recorded in medieval written sources involved elements of Christian ritual, we may expect that ritual behaviour was at least as important, if not more so, in a society where the written word did not provide guarantees of behaviour. In the High Middle Ages a ruler's dealings with his subjects were governed by ritual actions, particularly as he had a special status from the day of his inauguration.[141]

We have no detailed account of the investiture of Swedish kings before the fourteenth century. As in other medieval kingdoms, it appears that powerful groups, the king and his supporters, local magnates and the Church, exerted differing degrees of influence over the process at different times. Unfortunately, even where the extant law codes can be dated, we cannot be certain that their evidence for election of kings and kingship ritual reflects practice of that date. Coronation ceremonies, which were derived indirectly from biblical accounts of Saul and David, seem to have become common in western Europe during the late seventh century. By this ceremony secular and ecclesiastical nobles gave their assent to the ruler's authority and conferred divine protection upon him. From the occasion of his or her anointing with oil, an act similarly used to mark the entry of a person into the priesthood, a medieval ruler was a sacred person, set apart as adopted by God. In France anointing became an obligatory part of the king's coronation ceremony in 1230, but it was practised much earlier, the first known instance being either at the inauguration of Pippin III (the Short) in 751, or in 754, when

[141] On the whole question of ritual and its place in medieval politics, see especially Nelson 1986 and Althoff 2003b.

the practice of placing the crown on the ruler's head may also have been introduced to Frankia.[142] Anointing became standard with the accession of Charles the Bald as king of Aquitaine in 848.[143] In East Frankia Konrad I was anointed in 911, and anointing became part of the imperial coronation rites (*ordo*) during the Ottonian period, when the place was fixed as Aachen. The first known anointing of a queen occurred when Charles the Bald's daughter Judith married Æthelwulf of Wessex in 856, and the first English king known to be anointed was Athelstan in 925. All of these kingdoms exerted influence over Scandinavia by one means or another during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Within each kingdom the crown was normally placed by nobles and/or the archbishop who supervised the ceremony, but the imperial crown was conferred by the pope. During the twelfth century German emperors sometimes conferred crowns on Danish princes or kings in return for an act of submission.[144]

In Scandinavia coronation ceremonies of Franco-German type were made possible by the increased influence of the Church, and made desirable by the need to increase the chance of survival for new kings in the late twelfth century. Such a ceremony occurred in Norway in 1163/64, when the child Magnus Erlingsson was crowned, and in Denmark in 1170, with the coronation of Valdemar I. Valdemar's father, Knud Lavard, was elevated to sainthood in a simultaneous ceremony, and his son Knud was also crowned as future king in an attempt to secure the succession.[145] Especially in Norway, the Church extracted concessions in return for its assistance. It is perhaps significant that the 1247 coronation of Håkon is described in such detail in *Hákonar saga*, when another full ecclesiastical ceremony was held (again in return for concessions to the Church), whereas

[142] Pippin may have been anointed in 751, and re-anointed with his sons Charles and Carloman by Pope Stephen in 754, but doubts have been cast on the reliability of the sources, particularly for the first anointing. See Collins 1998 pp. 35–36.

[143] For the background to the anointing of Charles the Bald, see McKitterick 1983 pp. 193–96. The coronation ceremonies of Charles and Louis the Pious (879) were supervised by Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, who claimed Clovis (c. 496) had also been anointed, with balm that had appeared miraculously from above.

[144] Knud Lavard, *hertug* of Schleswig, received a crown from Lothar in 1131. Knud's murderer, Magnus Nielsen, gave an oath of obedience in return for a crown from Lothar in 1134, and Sven Grade was crowned by Friedrich I Barbarossa in return for an oath of obedience in 1152.

[145] For the development of coronations in Scandinavia, see Blom 1985 pp. 71–77.

coronations receive little attention in *Sverris saga* or *Heimskringla*. The first recorded coronation in Sweden was that of Erik Knutsson in 1210. Erik himself referred to it in 1212, and Pope Innocent III mentions that the archbishop anointed him in a letter of 1216.[146] The anointing probably took place during the same ceremony as the coronation, as occurred with Erik's successor, Johan Sverkersson.[147]

Once anointed a king was *rex Dei gratia*, king by the grace of God. By the late twelfth century coronations in Latin Christendom included the recitation of this formula, and it is interesting that it appears in Knut Eriksson's letters.[148] The function and power of the king was emphasised not only in imagery on coins or seals, but also in writing. Whatever kings called themselves before this, Karl Sverkersson is the first referred to by Pope Alexander III as *rex sveorum et gothorum* in the letter establishing the Archbishopric in Uppsala. Thereafter this title remains in correspondence, often with the addition *Dei gracia* . . . It is possible that the European coronation rites with mass and other ecclesiastical ceremonial were introduced in Knut's reign. During the same period, however, the jarl Birger Brosa adopted a similar formula in written correspondence, *Dei gracia dux sveorum et guttorum*, which suggests that it was not necessarily associated with anointing in Sweden at that time. Contemporary Scottish kings also used *Dei gracia* when addressing charters, but the words did not appear on their seals, and they were not anointed. In this case, however, the situation was complicated by the strenuous opposition of English monarchs to the acceptance of Scottish requests to the Pope that full inauguration rites be allowed in Scotland—the lack of coronation and anointing marked the Scottish kingship as inferior and subordinate to that of England.[149]

The first known coronation of a Swedish queen occurred in 1281, when Hedwig of Holstein was crowned alongside Magnus Ladulås. During medieval coronation rites for a queen prayers were also said for her fertility, clearly a matter of great importance to ensure the continuation of the royal line. According to *Hákonar saga* the old

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[146] ST 1, 131 and DS 144.

[147] DS 181.

[148] *Dei Gracia* was added to the title of the King of England during the reign of Henry II, at some time before May 1172. The claim to rule by the grace of God was much older. See Richardson and Sayles 1963 p. 140.

[149] Duncan 1975 pp. 552–54.

King Håkon of Norway emphasised the importance of this by insisting that there be a joint coronation for his son Magnus and his queen Ingeborg shortly after their wedding, although Magnus, the later Magnus Lagabøter, had already been accepted as king in 1257. Given Magnus Ladulås's later concern that his son Birger should succeed him, it would be surprising if Hedwig's coronation did not also include prayers for fecundity.

Kings, queens and jarls or *hertigar* probably received their titles as rulers of specific territories at their inauguration ceremonies. The practice of name-giving at baptism had itself a ritual significance, signifying continuity through the naming of a son or daughter after an older member of the family, in high medieval Sweden most frequently a grandparent. This particular custom was practised in both and pagan and Christian Scandinavia, and was closely linked with the interest in genealogy.[150] Genealogies are known to have been recited at some inauguration rituals in medieval Europe, for instance, that of Alexander III in Scotland.[151] In medieval Europe a king's inauguration signified a rebirth, the transfer of the kingship to another body. Such was the king's identification with the polity and with justice and order that periods of interregnum between the end of one ruler's (king's, pope's or prince's) reign and the accession of another were often accompanied by ritual disorder and acts that signified the suspension of law. If simple opportunism were not enough, this provided license for numerous acts of robbery and violence amongst those with the resources and opportunity to carry them out.[152] Abnormal behaviour of this type has also been recorded in tribal

[150] See Andersson 1992 p. 514.

[151] Duncan 1975 p. 555.

[152] For instance, referring to the death of Henry I, King of England and Duke of Normandy in 1136, Orderic Vitalis wrote that 'on the very same day that the Normans heard that their firm ruler had died . . . they rushed out hungrily like ravening wolves to plunder and ravage mercilessly': quoted in Hollister 2001 p. 475. The same author records the theft of William I's clothes and royal furnishings by his attendants on the day of his death in 1087. Accounts of what happened after Henry's reign are coloured by the 'anarchy' that prevailed in England as a result of the dispute between Stephen and Mathilda, but there are numerous other examples of such behaviour. Although Emperor Konrad II had called for an end to this tradition in Germany after disorder following the death of Heinrich II in 1124, there is no evidence that he succeeded. The tradition of disorder during a papal interregnum appears to go back well into the early Middle Ages: see Bertelli 2001 pp. 39–40.

societies when chiefs die, which suggests that it may occur in any polity that is identified with the person of the ruler, particularly one who has a sacral status.[153] Interregnal disruption declined as the idea of belonging to a polity, eventually *patria*, that was not simply defined by its ruler began to take shape. The medieval concept of a kingship that transcended individual kings was a stage on the road. An early elucidation of the concept of a transpersonal *regnum* was made by Konrad II in 1025, in response to citizens of Pavia, who claimed that they had done nothing wrong in destroying a royal palace after the death of Heinrich II, as they had no king at that time.[154]

There is insufficient evidence to assess the level of disruption after a ruler's death in pre-Christian Scandinavia, and we can only speculate on the contribution to disorder after a king's or jarl's death in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries that might have been made by the attitude that law was suspended. Certainly the outward symbols and rituals of continental kingship had been adopted by the fourteenth century, but it cannot be certain that there was any clear concept of a kingship that transcended the individual person of the king. On the other hand, the growth of continuity in succession, from the idea that a king had to be descended from a king to the rule of succession of kings from a single dynasty after 1250, must have contributed to the idea of continuity in kingship.

The law codes also provide glimpses of the procedures used during royal inaugurations in Sweden during the High Middle Ages. Formulaic passages in *Upplandslagen's Konungabalk* may derive from speeches recited at royal elections long before 1296, but there are also elements that are certainly post-Viking Age, such as the reference to the crown and the governance of the realm (*riki styræ*).[155] It is also clear from the early *Västgötalagen* that a new king swore oaths at inauguration ceremonies, in this case to uphold the law and show faith to the *götar*.[156] We may assume that oaths were sworn elsewhere in Sweden, as they were also in Norway. The *Konungabalk* of *Upplandslagen* begins as follows:

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[153] Hertz 2004 p. 40.

[154] According to Wipo in his *Gesta Chuonradi*, quoted in Weinfurter 1999 p. 32. See also Wolfram 2000 pp. 60, 84.

[155] Kuhn 1971 pp. 408–09.

[156] VgL 1, R 1.

> How a king shall be chosen and 'taken'.
> Now the land needs to choose a king. Then shall the three *folkland*, that is Tiunda-land and Attundaland and Fjädrundaland, first accept (*taka*) the king. First Uppland's *lagman* shall deem (*døma*) him king, and thereafter the other *lagmän*, one after the other: Södermanland's, Östgötaland's, Tiohärad's, Västgötaland's, Närke's and Västmanland's. They shall deem him to crown and to kingdom, to govern the land and to rule the realm, to strengthen the law and ensure peace. Then he has the right to Uppsala öd.[157]

The word *taka* appears to refer specifically to the acceptance of the king by the three *folkland* of Uppland, perhaps constituting the original kingdom to which the king acceded, 'the *svear*' to whom *Västgötalagen* refers. We can only guess at what this involved, but the heading to the *flock* indicates that it occurred after election, so there was probably some element of ritual involved. The deeming 'to crown and kingdom, to govern the land and rule the realm, to make the law and ensure peace' almost certainly presupposes an oath, and was clearly an act, probably of a ritual nature, supervised or carried out by the *lagman* of each *land*. Oaths to fulfil specific obligations as a Christian ruler had taken an important place in the investiture of Charles the Bald, and were naturally seen by churchmen such as Hincmar as placing the king under some degree of obligation to the *sacerdotium*. Rituals of this nature may have taken place at the coronation ceremony in Uppsala church, after the *eriksgata*. However, the practice of oath-giving itself would not have been alien to pre-Christian Scandinavians; oaths that obliged the king to act as *rex iustus* were no doubt introduced under the influence of European inauguration rituals, but those that required a ruler to keep faith with *svear* or *götar*, or to respect traditional laws, may derive from earlier practice.[158] In Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* the expressions 'taka' and 'døma' have disappeared.

As well as recitation of formulaic passages inaugurations probably involved the formal handing over of insignia, similar to the instances in which the king handed a crozier and ring to a new bishop, or an object of office to new *domare*.[159] As observed by several scholars,

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[157] UL Kg 1. *Södermannalagen* differs in that there is an election by a council of all Sweden to elect the king at Mora before the deemings (SdmL Kg 1). See Chapter 5.
[158] See Frense 1982 pp. 229–63.
[159] VgL 1, R 2.

the handing over of keys to the wife at marriage ceremonies and to a new owner of property when he received his inheritance show how widespread this type of ritual was.[160] Twelfth- and thirteenth-century evidence for the handing over of insignia at Swedish coronations does not exist, but we do know that such regalia existed from the evidence of coins and seals. Birger Magnusson is recorded as having worn special clothing at his inauguration in 1310, very likely garments of ecclesiastical style similar to those worn by other kings of Latin Christendom at their coronations. This was undoubtedly a medieval custom, but how early some of the other regalia of office were adopted is uncertain. Figures or heads with Roman diadems appear on bracteates of the Migration and Vendel Periods, and a variety of objects from Vendel Period graves have been controversially interpreted as sceptres and other insignia of status or position.[161] Coins of the Christian kings Olof Skötkonung and Anund Jakob (c. 1020–50) depict them with several regnal symbols, but there is no way of knowing whether they were given at an inauguration, or when they were actually used. The same applies to the coins of Knut Eriksson and his successors, although by then it is much more likely that customs from further south had been adopted.[162] Anund Jakob is the first Swedish king depicted as wearing an identifiably medieval crown.

Although *Upplandslagen* stipulates that kings should be crowned in Uppsala, no coronation is recorded there until that of Birger Magnusson in 1310. One aspect of the Swedish investiture that is mentioned in several law-codes and other sources is the raising of the king on to the Mora stone. Although not necessarily a habitual practice, the physical raising of a new emperor is recorded during the late Roman period.[163] Stones appear in connection with medieval inauguration rituals in a number of European contexts, but the origin of the traditions are often unknown.[164] According to the *Chronicon Lethrense* a

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[160] Sundqvist 2002 p. 320, note 110.

[161] See Ambrosiani 1983 pp. 23–30, and, for purposes of comparison and origin, Muller-White 1983 pp. 109–116, James 1992 pp. 243–254, and Care-Evans 1994 pp. 83–93.

[162] Malmer 1989 and 1997.

[163] Ammianus records the raising of Julian on an infantry soldier's shield in 360, and according to Cassiodorus a similar tradition existed among the Goths: Ammianus Marcellinus 20, 4:17, and Cassiodorus, *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae* 10:31, p. 318.

[164] Sundqvist 2002 p. 315 states that 'Stones or mounds seem to be important

new king of Denmark received his royal name while standing on a stone.[165] *Erikskrönikan* specifically mentions the Mora stone in connection with the election of Magnus Ladulås, but the raising of the king on the stone may well have become part of the election ritual after *Upplandslagen* was written.[166] In Magnus Eriksson's *landslag* only 'morothing' is mentioned, whereas 'morasten' also appears in Christoph's (Sw. Kristoffer) *landslag*. The stone makes its most spectacular appearance in Olaus Magnus's *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* ('History of the Northern Peoples', 1536), where it is described as huge and surrounded by twelve other stones, of which no trace has been found.[167] Sjöholm suggests that *Erikskrönikan* or its source was the origin of the myth, which later became a reality, possibly in connection with comparable ceremony in Magnus Eriksson's accession to the Norwegian throne.[168] Not only is there no mention of *morasten*, but neither in *Upplandslagen* nor in the election statute of Magnus

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at ancient inaugurations in general.' The evidence for mounds as important assembly places in Scandinavia is better than that for stones. Examples of stones at medieval inaugurations include that related in the *Chronicle of Lejre* (Denmark), and the more certain Scottish 'Stone of Destiny' (Scone). Scone was certainly the place of inauguration for Scottish kings during the early Middle Ages, but the age of the stone is less certain: Driscoll 2004 pp. 73–95 (pp. 84–87). According to Ailred of Rievaulx, the Scottish king David I, brought up in the Anglo-Norman tradition, found something objectionable in the Scottish investiture ceremony at Scone, but this does not necessarily mean that it was something of distant (perhaps even pagan) origin: see Oram 2004 p. 74. If the 'Stone of Destiny' was indeed present at inaugurations in Dál Riata, originally an Irish kingdom and forerunner of the Kingdom of Scotland, its importance might have derived from there, but good evidence for Irish inauguration stones is also late medieval: see FitzPatrick 2004 pp. 99–129. The relatively well-known tale of the Lia Fáil stone of Tara in the genealogical tract *De Shíl Chonairi Móir* says nothing of raising the king on to a stone, nor does the later (ninth-century) *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga*, which also tells of Conaire's investiture; see Byrne 1973 pp. 63–64. Ancient standing stones and the earthworks that often surrounded them were objects of awe to medieval people, and it may well be for this reason that they feature in Irish myths and were used as meeting places, although their association with ceremonies could be a survival of ancient tradition. There is one other European inauguration stone recorded in the Middle Ages, the *fürstenstein* of Carinthia, a pillar base from a Roman building. *Herzog* Meinhard II was inaugurated at this stone in 1286: see Johan von Vikting pp. 290–93, and Ottokar von Steiermark, pp. 264–66.

[165] This 'Chronicle of Lejre' is contained within manuscripts of the Annals of Lund (1250s), and is dated to c. 1170, largely on the basis that it was it was clearly used by Saxo as a source for his *Gesta Danorum*. As a result the same reference to name-giving occurs in Saxo's history.

[166] *Ek*, v. 955.

[167] Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, 8:1, p. 243.

[168] Sjöholm 1988 pp. 297–98, n. 5.

Eriksson's *landslag* is there any mention that the king's investiture was done on Mora field, as there is in *Västgötalagen, Södermannalagen, Erikskrönikan* and elsewhere in Magnus Eriksson's *landslag*.[169] It is therefore possible that Mora field was adopted as the place of investiture only in the fourteenth century. On the other hand, it might have been the site long before *Erikskrönikan*, since election in the region later called Uppland had probably been standard practice for almost three centuries, and elsewhere in Europe such institutions tended to follow a ritual procedure, one aspect of which is likely to have been investiture on a specific site. As noted earlier, Mora field was ideally situated, near the boundary between Attundaland and Tiundaland.

References to stones are relatively rare, but many sources that tell of European inauguration rituals refer to the physical elevation of a ruler, usually to a high seat. Such seats also played an important role at other events over which the king presided. Thrones existed in the ancient Near East and Byzantium, and Charlemagne had a stone one, but this need not have been the origin of the medieval Scandinavian high seat, which existed in the pre-Christian period and could have appeared independently in the European Iron Age, if not before, as a physical representation of social superiority in an increasingly stratified society.[170] The Norwegian *Hirðskrá* mentions that the king was carried to his high seat.[171] *Gulaþings lov* also refers to the seating of the king in his high seat when he distributed an inheritance.[172] In *Sverris saga* King Sverre also sits in his high seat to await death.[173] The one reference to a throne in medieval Sweden that may derive from the thirteenth century or earlier is that of St Erik's legend, which states that he was raised gloriously to the throne of the kingdom at Uppsala.[174]

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[169] SdmL, Kg 1.

[170] Sundqvist 2002 pp. 230–52.

[171] *Hirðskrá* 5, pp. 7–8, 16, pp. 17–18. *Heimskringla*, III, p. 247, also refers to the king leading a jarl to a high seat.

[172] Older GulL 115, NGL 1, p. 51: *Nu er maðr dauðr, arve scal i ondvege setiazt* ('Now that the man is dead, his heir shall sit in the high seat'). Also in the Older FrostL, NGL 1, p. 213: *Siálfr scal hverr ráða fé síno meðan hann ma sitia i ondvegi síno. svá cona sem carlmaðr* ('A person may manage his estate while he is able to sit in the high seat, whether man or woman').

[173] Sverris saga 180, p. 193: . . . *laata hefia mik upp i haasætid ok vil ek þar bida annathuort bot edr bana.* ('. . . let me be lifted up into the high seat and there I will await cure or death').

[174] Vita Sanct Eric Regis [ed. Schmid], p. x: . . . *in regni solio apud Upsaliam honorifice sublimatur.*

There is a strong probability that the *eriksgata* acquired a ritual function, even if it did not have one when it was first carried out. Having been elected by the *svear*, the king travelled deosil (OS *raet-søles*, clockwise) round the realm, visiting the provincial *ting* of each *land*, where he was also deemed king. Whatever the origins of the name *eriksgata* in Sweden, the route taken in Finland, *Airikintie*, was very likely associated with St Erik. Vilkuna has suggested that this route was combined with that of St Henrik, the road leading from Nousiainen, probable original seat of the Bishop of Åbo. It is very probable that it was not only the journey round Svealand and Götaland (whether actually carried out or not) that had a fixed route. Unfortunately, in high medieval Sweden we know nothing of any processional route taken to a church where a coronation took place, or to a regional *ting* where a king was accepted, but there are numerous records of medieval processions that presaged the accession of a new king elsewhere in Europe. They often followed the route of a town's earliest walls and passed through a specific gate, and signified cleansing and the restoration of order.[175] Virtually the whole populace took part, whose different sections (for instance, men, women and children, or nobles and people of lower status) were often allocated specific dress, functions, and places in the procession or alongside the route. These naturally reinforced the relative social standings of those taking part.

Since the place of coronation varied in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sweden, a traditional processional route may not have been established by the late thirteenth century. Nor did Sweden's towns have walls by that time (the earliest being those of Kalmar, which were built around the turn of the century), although a boundary might have been marked in another fashion. However, similar processions accompanied the inauguration of a new bishop, the installation of relics or the celebration of a feast day. There are references to some of these in thirteenth-century Sweden, such as the Mass for St Erik in 1277, in which King Magnus and Queen Hedwig took a prominent part. The *Miracula Sancti Erici Regis et Martyris* mentions two processions, one in which St Erik's relics were carried from Gamla Uppsala cathedral to Östra Aros, and another in which Erik's shrine was carried round the church on August 10, the feast-day of

[175] Bertelli 2001 pp. 75–79.

Laurentius.[176] In the later Middle Ages the reading or singing of ritual texts was included in ceremonial processions for saints' days, and it is probably safe to assume that this occurred in the thirteenth century, if not earlier.[177] Such processions were presumably supervised by churchmen, but it is likely that nobility and royalty also appeared on the most important days, particularly those associated with royal saints.

The form that many medieval European processions took was heavily influenced by that of the Roman triumph, probably adopted from Byzantium.[178] The triumph was also known from numerous classical works and monuments, but biblical models exerted the greatest subsequent influence. On mainland Europe processions also accompanied a victor when he entered a defeated city, as did the procession of the defeated that came out to submit, the whole procedure having a ritual nature designed to demonstrate submission by the vanquished.[179] Just as the spoils of victory were carried in procession in a triumph, so the regalia of secular and spiritual power were carried at a coronation, and probably on other occasions: sword, sceptre, orb (globe), relics, as well as banners or the like that had a more specific importance to the king or queen in question. All these symbols of sovereignty were used on coins in Sweden from the reign of Knut Eriksson onwards (see below), but evidence for their use in rituals is lacking. Roman monuments may seem a world away from high medieval Sweden, where the written culture of mainland Europe did not truly penetrate until the late thirteenth century, whereas Frankish, German and Italian kings and princes had been in contact with them centuries earlier. Nevertheless, Sweden was increasingly influenced by practice further south, and even in the Iron Age Roman cultural influence extended to Scandinavia. The model for the *eriksgata* may have come from the German kings, but, as noted in chapter 5, it may equally well have originated in Sweden itself. As happened with concepts of land ownership and laws, old traditions must have been re-interpreted and altered in the light of new influences.

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[176] Miracula Sancti Erici Regis et Martyris, Miracles 2 and 32, pp. 278 and 300.
[177] Hultgård 1992 p. 64.
[178] McCormick 1986, Bertelli 2001 pp. 86–87, 94–95.
[179] See, for instance, Althoff's comments on Thangmar's (*Vita Bernwardi*) description of the submission (*deditio*) of the citizens of Tivoli to the emperor in 1001: Althoff 2003a pp. 118–20.

Medieval kings were certainly not isolated from the majority of people in their realm, but were usually accessible under ritualised conditions and on (numerous) special occasions. In Europe south of Scandinavia liturgical acclamations (*laudes regiae*) were made regularly when kings held ritual crown-wearings, often on a solemn occasion that required the presence of assembled nobility, such as a major feast-day. Like so many other Christian ritual practices, this was adapted from Byzantine models in the Carolingian and Ottonian empires.[180] The custom was already prevalent among the Franks and probably in England in the tenth century.[181] The ruler appeared in public with his insignia to receive the homage of the people and was sometimes re-crowned. Later, certain kings expanded the practice, so that it occurred on almost every appearance of the ruler.[182] Possible evidence that similar ceremonies took place in Sweden as early as the twelfth century is provided by the balconies on western towers of churches such as Hov and Vreta in Östergötland and Husaby in Västergötland. These resemble similar structures on churches in Germany, England and France, all used by the ruler for such ceremonies and sited within known or probable royal estates.[183] The Swedish churches are also situated within possible *kungsgårdar* or *gårdar* that belonged to families which held the kingship.

The ritual procedure to be followed whenever anyone approached a monarch and their prominent position at religious celebrations would have reinforced their social and sacral status. Acts of clemency in response to enemies who had submitted to the ruler's mercy, or in response to generosity to the Church or the poor were carried out publicly, normally on ceremonial occasions. Even from twelfth- and thirteenth century Sweden there are many documents that record donations to the church at the accession of a new king; it is likely that they were announced at some stage during the ceremony when kings were invested with their powers and insignia of office. Similarly, records of donations and largesse shortly before death have survived.

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[180] Kantorowicz 1946 pp. 46–53.

[181] On the history of the *laudes regiae* in England, see Richardson and Sayles 1963 pp. 405–12.

[182] England's Henry III (1216–72), for instance, had as many as sixteen crown-wearings in some years, whereas his predecessors seemed to have generally held three per year, with additional ones when required (for instance, after Richard I finally returned from captivity in 1193). See Kantorowicz 1945 pp. 175–76.

[183] For instance, St Denis and Lorsch, both built in the late eighth century.

There are no detailed accounts of death from high medieval Sweden, but the way in which it was handled must have come increasingly to resemble that elsewhere in Latin Europe as its culture penetrated the north. Unless they died from the sudden stroke of a weapon or an unexpected accident, medieval European nobility usually died indoors. Nevertheless, they did not die alone, but surrounded by friends and relatives, and it was during their preparation for death that they announced their testament.[184] During their lifetimes those with the greatest wealth obviously had the greatest power to give largesse and hold feasts, which involved a considerable outlay. Anyone invited was placed under obligation to make any subsequent negotiation a success.[185] There is plenty of evidence that the showing of generosity and the holding of feasts for followers, who reciprocated with their support, was a pre-Christian practice, but Iron Age and Viking Age chiefs or kings must have been less distant from the general population than the kings of the High Middle Ages. By the thirteenth century kings and queens of Sweden appeared in public more rarely, and when they did so they were often accompanied by regalia that emphasised their royalty and special status.

11.5. *Coinage and kingship*

Despite his participation in numerous ritual activities, for the majority of people in any medieval polity the king was a remote figure, and coinage represented a useful tool of propaganda, which reached more people than seals, the other main source of royal imagery for this period. Although coins and inscribed bracteates have been found which date from the period of Olof Skötkonung and Anund Jakob,

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[184] Medieval nobility could not, of course, always predict exactly when they were about to die. Some, such as Empress Mathilda, believed an illness was their last but subsequently recovered. However, death was far more public than it is today, and virtually every medieval noble would have witnessed it. Often they were better able to assess when their end was coming than we might be. See Crouch 1997 pp. 157–80.

[185] See, for example, Gagliardo 1993 pp. 69, 242, and Jordan 1986 pp. 151–52 on the treatment of Heinrich der Löwe ('the Lion') by the twelfth-century Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos, who was very skilful in the use of lavish ceremonial to emphasises his superior status, to flatter (or in some cases, humiliate) opponents and to place them under obligation to him.

continuous issues of coinage in Sweden occurred only after the mid-twelfth century, over a century later, beginning in the reign of Knut Eriksson (1167–1196). At the end of his reign some coins were apparently minted for the Archbishop in Uppsala, but the majority of mints are clearly royal issues.[186] Most are imitations of Imperial and Danish examples which began to appear several decades before.[187] The majority of these have the forward-facing head of the king, usually crowned, which may be accompanied by a number of royal symbols. These include sceptre and ciborium or church, orb and banner, sword and orb, star or ring, or sword and shield.[188] They resemble earlier (continental) images of Christ in Majesty and the emperors, with the addition of symbols of civil and military power. The symbols on a number of coins have however degenerated into abstractions of these images. Few have any inscription, but some contain the inscriptions KANVTVS or IVA or IV. The latter has been interpreted both as a corrupted (C)IV(itas) A(rosiensis), Uppsala, and as VIA, *Via Regia*, the image as St Erik as well as Knut Eriksson himself.[189] The representations bear close similarity to those on the KANVTVS coins. Coins minted in Lödöse all bear the crowned head.

The next reign from which coins can definitely be dated is that of Johan Sverkersson (1216–1222). With the exception of the frequently-used outer pearl ring, these differ markedly from those of Knut Eriksson's reign. In the centre they contain images of power, such as a crown, upturned sword, star, the head of a lion, falcon, eagle or griffon or a castle, but none has an image of the king himself. The usurper Knut Långe (1229–34) also issued coins or bracteates of assorted types. Individual coins from this period have also been unearthed at Skänninge nunnery and Lemland church, bearing the inscriptions NYCOPIE and SIGT[(VN) respectively, the first with a K in the inner ring.[190] Nine appear to have been minted in Uppsala, bearing crowned heads, a heraldic shield, a lion passant facing right, a fleur-de-lys, a rose, a standard and a fortified tower. Some bear

[186] Lagerqvist 1970 pp. 48–50, classed as Group 1B.
[187] See, for example, Riis 1977 pp. 151–169.
[188] Lagerqvist 1970 pp. 44–47.
[189] Lagerqvist 1970 p. 45; Sjöberg 1986 p. 2.
[190] Rasmusson 1962 p. 40; Lagerqvist 1970 p. 54.

the inscription KANVTVS, one A.R.V.S.A.R (*Östra Aros*, Uppsala).[191] The most controversial bracteate had an outer pearl ring with a banner and the letters VICA in the centre. The same letters are found on a Knut Eriksson bracteate, and Sjöberg interpreted this to be a shortened form of *VICARIUS*, a term which the Norwegian king Magnus Erlingson used of himself in relation to St Olaf, Norway's *rex perpetuus*. The hypothesis is reasonable, as Knut Eriksson and Knut Långe were both usurpers, and would have had good reason to advertise their relationship with St Erik, and therefore to promote the position of the royal saint himself.[192]

Knut Långe's status as ruler of Sweden is uncertain, but king and Church bore no monopoly of coin issues at this time, as emphasised by the issue of coins with the inscriptions VLF IARL and WLF DUX. The minting of coins with the name of the jarl Ulf Fase emphasises his powerful position in the state, and the practice was also followed by Birger Jarl. The two Ulf Jarl bracteates resemble those of Knut Långe closely, and probably also originate at Uppsala. One has a hand in the centre ring, the other an animal, perhaps a wolf.

Numbers of coin finds are not necessarily a reflection of the number of coins in circulation, but it may not be coincidence that coins are lacking from known periods of instability. This does not apply, however, to the majority of the reign of Erik Eriksson (1222–29 and 1234–50), although his authority may have been weak. Coins bearing his name appear to have been minted in Götaland. Only one coin of possible Svealand origin dated to this period has been found, bearing the letter E-R. However, there are three with the inscription REX VPSALIE, which some scholars consider to be mints of the Svealand rebels of 1248–51, but may be issues of the king.[193] They have a cross, a crown surmounted with a fleur-de-lys, and a letter A in their central rings. The issue of coins would certainly have been a useful step in promoting any rival claim to the throne, given its association with central power, and the inscription may refer to St Erik. It is interesting that no specific king is named on these coins, which

[191] An inscription once thought to refer to Västra Aros: Lagerqvist 1970 p. 54.

[192] Sjöberg 1986 pp. 4–6. Rasmusson 1962 argued that the letters represented A(ROSIENSIS) CIV(ITAS), but Sjöberg points out that other examples of coins where the mint is named in the inner circle are unknown.

[193] Sjöberg 1986 pp. 8–9.

may represent a general appeal to Uppland sentiment. Although of probable Västergötland origin himself, by this time Erik Jedvardsson had become a popular saint in Uppland, if never officially acknowledged by the Church.[194]

Coins belonging to the reign of Valdemar Birgersson are all variations on a central crown within a ring, those of Magnus Ladulås an M within a ring, thus displaying far more uniformity in style, and perhaps indicative of greater royal control over minting.[195] Like Västergötland coins of Birger Jarl, which have a B within a pearl ring or rings, these are simple compared with the devices represented on coins of Knut Eriksson, but still make their origin clear to any user. Several bracteates minted in Götaland had an E in the centre. These were originally thought to be issues of Erik Birgersson, but he was not a *hertig*, and died in 1275. Jonsson argued further that the context in which the coins were found suggests that they were minted in c. 1280. Sjöberg has pursued this line and suggested that these too could be coins of rebel *folkungar*, once more claiming an association with St Erik.[196] The location of the 1278–80 revolts was Västergötland, where there is little evidence that Erik was then a popular saint, and the rebels had less connection to St Erik than previous *folkungar*, but it is possible that St Erik had become a symbol of revolt. Alternative explanations of the E-bracteates are also unsatisfactory, so the question of their symbolism remains open.

To judge by coin finds, the late thirteenth century was the period when monetisation of the economy took root.[197] It was also the period in which issues by non-royal people such as jarls or archbishops disappear and Östergötland appears to have abandoned use of Gotland coinage (outside the control of the king in Svealand) and adopted royal mints. Eight such mints are listed in the will of Magnus Ladulås, many corresponding with sites of new castles, and the issues are far more uniform in style than those of previous periods.

[194] P. Sawyer 1991a pp. 59–60.
[195] Lagerqvist 1970 pp. 58–59
[196] Sjöberg 1986 pp. 9–10.
[197] Klackenberg 1992 pp. 20–25.

11.6. *Monuments*

During the late thirteenth century a new style of art penetrated Sweden, the gothic. The style developed in France from the late twelfth century onwards alongside the power of the monarchy.[198] It is often attributed to Abbot Suger, who initiated building work in a new style at St Denis in 1135. As 'the most Christian king', the king of France was thereafter increasingly to be represented alongside the patriarchs and prophets in the holiest places, emphasising the continuity in function and relationship with God. More than anything else the Gothic style is associated with the great cathedrals, which were embellished with statues of kings, queens and Old Testament kings and prophets.[199] Like the architectural style, the style of decoration subsequently spread to England and Spain, and French architects were soon at work throughout Europe. Monumental and prominent statues reminded those who attended services in the buildings of the role of their kings and queens as benefactors of the Church as well as their association with God. Besides the statues and crowned heads that adorned capitals, especially in England, the custom of decorating tombs with sculptures of dead princes and kings began to spread around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Like most other cultural influences, the gothic style arrived in Denmark before appearing in the other Scandinavian countries, where it arguably had a greater impact. Depictions of kings and their families on ecclesiastical architecture in Sweden began to appear in the mid-thirteenth century, the advent of the Folkung period. Early ones, such as the head of a king on a baptismal font in Vinköl, Västergötland, showed a series of typical features rather than anything identifiable as an individual, but Jan Svanberg has argued convincingly that gothic representations of people (and other natural phenomena) which appeared towards the end of the reign of Valdemar Birgersson were intended to be likenesses. Many continental gothic statues or heads show individual features, and some are known to have been modelled

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[198] As well as being called the father of the French monarchy, Suger has been called, perhaps with more justification, the father of the gothic style, known in some thirteenth-century sources as *opus francigenum*. See especially Panofsky 1979.

[199] The oldest gallery of kings was in the cathedral of Notre Dame, and dated to the 1220s. It was destroyed during the French Revolution, but similar galleries in Rheims, Amiens and Chartres have survived.

on their subjects, such as that of King Rudolf (Habsburg) of Germany.[200] Svanberg showed that certain gothic features were incorporated in the tomb of Queen Katarina († 1252), which may have been inspired by examples in France, particularly the tomb of Queen Berenguela (Berengaria) of England in the Cistercian convent of L'Épau. However, these did not include the features of the queen herself. Further aspects of gothic style appeared later, especially in the styling of the clothing on the statues of Birger Jarl and his son Erik and Queen Mechtilde in Varnhem. These were presumably created at the behest of King Magnus, who honoured his father and younger brother in his testament. An earlier head on a Varnhem corbel, which is turned to face his grave, almost certainly represents Birger Jarl, as the cleft chin conforms to that of his skull, and the hair and clean-shaven face to that on seal depictions. The crown has a combination of English and continental insignia, the leaf pattern and roses respectively. The roses probably also represent the similar five-petalled roses on Birger's second coat-of-arms, adopted after he became jarl.

Towards the end of King Valdemar's reign comparable representations of heads appeared in cathedrals, more exposed to the public eye. By analogy with similar examples, Svanberg identified two in Skara as the heads of Valdemar and his brother *Hertig* Magnus.[201] Valdemar's head appeared again in the cathedral of Uppsala, attached to a lion rampant (the heraldic beast of the Folkung family arms), identified by the same beard. These developments are paralleled by those in neighbouring Norway, where similar heads have long been recognised as portraits of her kings.[202] It is from the same period, the end of Valdemar's reign, that we first have records of the widespread use of heraldic arms by the Swedish nobility, although some may have adopted them earlier, since a device of some sort is depicted on the shield of Birger Brosa († 1202). The lion rampant was not adopted as the arms of the *Folkungaätten* until later. To the people

[200] Svanberg 1988 p. 137.

[201] Svanberg drew particular comparison with the pair of heads in Selby, England, representing King Henry III and his son Edward, and with seal portraits.

[202] In particular, those in Stavanger cathedral, a head of Magnus Lagabøter and a pair of heads representing his sons King Erik and *Hertig* Håkon. A pair of heads of Magnus Lagabøter and his son *Hertig* Håkon, now in Larvik, were taken from the old Oslo cathedral.

of Sweden, its kings must have become more and more familiar, represented on coins, in an increasing number of charters and laws that were read to them, and in an identifiably individual style on monuments. Yet, in another sense they may have become more remote, represented on ever more impressive structures and more closely associated with God.

11.7. *Final remarks*

Despite the paucity of written sources there is sufficient evidence from Sweden to trace a steady influx of practices associated with Christian kingship from western and central Europe. Without sufficient written evidence, it is impossible to say whether Swedish royal iconography that resembles similar iconography from Germany and elsewhere was a mere imitation of style, its themes only partially understood. However, Sweden was certainly not isolated from developments elsewhere. Not only clergy, but architects and artists travelled widely in Europe. Even before 1130 some of the regalia of Christian kingship had been adopted, such as the crown. Much of the impetus for royal propaganda undoubtedly originated with Knut Eriksson. His predecessors had recognised the importance of Christianity to their authority, hence their attempts to foster its growth, but it is in Knut's reign that we see the conscious imitation of continental kingship imagery, closely associated with an attempt to make Sweden a kingdom comparable with neighbouring Denmark. Swedish coins may have been crude by the standards of some other medieval states, let alone Hellenistic or Roman examples, but their imagery was probably clear to most people. Knut's fostering of his father's cult, besides strengthening the right of his own dynasty to the throne, was probably intended to increase his authority in Uppland, where the cult was centred. However, use of money was not widespread until the Folkung Period; not only did Knut Eriksson lack the resources available to Magnus Ladulås from taxation, but his influence over Östergötland and Svealand must have been weak at times. Magnus had greater means at his disposal to build more impressive monuments in order to propagate his own image and authority, but this was also increasingly bolstered by a supportive literate clergy, with or without his encouragement.

However enthusiastically Swedish kings and their agents adopted

architectural styles, iconography, regalia and ceremony, we cannot be sure that they absorbed even the most simplified idea of the king's dual nature, let alone the sophisticated political theology of a few German, French, English and Italian jurists or other theorists.[203] Rituals practised by rulers in kingdoms that had been Christianised before Sweden were more accessible and must have had a more immediate appeal than political theology. Much of this was probably beyond the majority of European rulers, even in kingdoms with a long Christian tradition. Nevertheless, even if Friedrich II's interest in such matters was exceptional, several other high medieval rulers (or people close to them) chose to demonstrate their awareness of the sacral nature of their office, including István of Hungary and Valdemar I of Denmark (quoted above), both rulers of kingdoms Christianised in the tenth century. Silence does not necessarily constitute evidence of ignorance, but it is only from Magnus Ladulås's reign that we first have clear signs of the penetration of the *rex iustus* ideal into Sweden, albeit from sources that are not known to have been close to him. Even in the neighbouring kingdom of Norway, which had a longer written tradition, it is only in this period that the Christian ideal of kingship fully penetrated court circles. Although the *legendae* of royal saints bear no clear resemblance to 'pagan' tales of mythic origins, it may be that the idea of an ancestor who had sacral attributes resonated with Swedish kings, and it is perhaps for this reason that the cult of Erik Jedvardsson was promoted relatively early. However, it did not gain national importance until two centuries later.

When the effect of ideas of Christian sacral kingship on the king's subjects is considered, it is important to remember that the majority of medieval people formed their image of the king from ritual and pictorial representation, alongside what they heard in everyday conversation, speeches and sermons. The theories of theologians and jurists would have filtered down to them in a very simplified, if not distorted, form. However theorists tried to reconcile the divine nature of the king's office with his temporal body, the body politic with the body natural, many of the laity probably did consider the king and queen as in some way divine. This was as true of other Christian

[203] Much the same observation has been made with regard to the adoption of Byzantine ideas of Christian rulership in Kievan Rus: see Tolochko 2004 pp. 249–68.

kingdoms as it was of Sweden, hence the belief that the king had thaumaturgic powers, which developed in France and England; through the king's touch God could communicate directly.

The 'king' of the High Middle Ages implied more than the person, both in the physical sense, in that he represented an administrative apparatus, and in the spiritual sense as the embodiment of a sacral institution. As noted above, high medieval kings were not invulnerable from the wrath of their subjects. However, alongside the development of more administrative machinery, the ideology of Christian sacral kingship and succession probably made a significant contribution to the stability of many European kingdoms, since it discouraged deposition and regicide. Towards the end of the thirteenth century permanent loyalty also began to be expected of a Scandinavian king's followers (or *lið*); this can be seen, for example in the Norwegian *Konungs skuggsjá*, in which more is expected than the conditional support given to, and often withdrawn from, successive kings in *Heimskringla*.[204] This had been a Europe-wide phenomenon: there is a clear contrast between the fate of early Anglo-Saxon kings, few dying in bed, and those of the late Anglo-Saxon and Norman-Plantagenet period. The same contrast may be made between Merovingian and Capetian France. In Norway and Sweden the chance of survival for kings also increased in the thirteenth century, but in Sweden old traditions of electing and 'casting out' died hard.

In the circumstances of twelfth-century Sweden, where Christianity had only recently become established, and in which the Roman Church had long since adopted a policy of conversion through rulers, it is not surprising that there was, on the whole, close cooperation between monarchs and ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Church provided the legal and administrative expertise needed by royal government to extend its authority. While there is no doubt that some magico-religious practices survived from the pre-Christian period, particularly those related to the everyday concerns of people, the experience of conversion among the Germanic successor kingdoms of the Roman Empire had already adapted Christianity to many of the attitudes prevalent among northern European warrior aristocracies. Scandinavian kings of the twelfth century, including the Danish Valdemar I, the

[204] Bagge 1996 p. 22.

Norwegian Magnus Erlingsson and the Swedish Knut Eriksson all legitimised their positions by claiming descent from dynastic saints, respectively Knud Lavard, Olaf Haraldsson and Erik Jedvardsson. In the thirteenth century the sons of Birger Jarl also adopted Erik, from whom they were descended on their mother's side. Similar sanction was sought by dynasties in east-central Europe, and does not necessarily represent a direct continuation of pagan 'descent from the gods'. Rather, a feature common to all societies in which the supernatural was ever-present was that the elite sought divine sanction of its dominance. Although there was some continuity, given that many of the requirements of rulership are constant, there are no specific practices or aspects of its medieval kingship ideology that can definitely be traced to Sweden's pagan past, or that cannot be as easily attributed to continental influence.

CHAPTER TWELVE

EASTWARD EXPANSION

By the end of the reign of Magnus Ladulås much of the territory of present-day Finland had become part of the Swedish kingdom. This included the coastal regions of Pohjanmaa (Ostrobothnia), Satakunta, Varsinais-Suomi ('Finland Proper') and Uusimaa (Nyland), together with Häme and most of Savo. The *Vita Sanct Eric Regis* includes an account of a military expedition to Christianise the Finns of (Varsinais-)Suomi, and *Erikskrönikan* tells of another to Häme, led by Birger Magnusson. These have become known to history as the First and Second Crusades to Finland; although neither source uses the term 'crusade', the way in which the expeditions are described makes it appropriate. However, there is now serious doubt about the authenticity of both accounts—both the Christianisation of Finland and its absorption into the Swedish realm have been seen as much longer and more gradual processes. As in the case of Sweden itself, and often on the basis of the work of Swedish scholars, some Finnish scholars have in the past maintained that certain post-conquest institutions retained traces of pre-conquest Finland. Before turning to the nature of the Swedish conquest (if conquest it was) and the changes it wrought, it is therefore necessary to consider the character of Finland before this.

12.1. *Finland before Österland*

Insofar as they can be considered a part of Finland, the Åland Islands are a special case. During the early Viking Period they became 'Swedish' to all intents and purposes. Archaeological finds suggest a strong early influence from Svealand, but closer similarities with Östergötland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The change in the late Viking Period may be linked to reorientation of *svea* Viking interests from the east to the west, where they had more to gain serving in the armies of Sven Forkbeard and Knud after the rise of the Rurikid dynasty in Rus. Whereas it was once thought that a

break in the continuity of evidence in the eleventh century signified depopulation, this has since been rejected, largely on the grounds that the Romanesque churches built in the twelfth century point to initiative from wealthy *bönder*.[1] There has been some debate about the existence of *kungsgårdar* on the islands. The patron's rights of some churches seem to have passed to the crown, and place-names indicate the existence of *vakt* (*warþhold*) rules similar to those of Svealand. The best evidence, however, is the later existence of taxes such as *ledungslama* and *skeppsörtugar*. Sjöstrand has assessed the contribution of the islands as forty marks per ship, two per *treding* and one for the whole *landskap*, a total of seven ships. The *ledunglama* and butter tax were assessed as *markskatter*, a parallel to the Svealand *markland*.[2] Given the strategic situation of the islands in the Baltic it is no surprise that there was probably a ship levy. Although Åland later became part of the diocese of Åbo (Finland) it cannot be assumed that practices on Åland were necessarily followed on the mainland, where circumstances were different. Nevertheless, Åland must have acted as an important conduit through which mainland Finland received goods and influences from Sweden, not least Christian belief, which arrived there in the same period as it first took root in mainland Finland, the late eleventh century.

An assortment of Finnish regional names occur in late medieval sources; although variations on *Suomi, Kalanti, Savo* and *Kainuu* are Finnish names, the regions they represented under Swedish administration cannot be shown to correspond to pre-conquest political or social divisions.[3] Kainuu often referred to or included Satakunta and Pohjanmaa (Ostrobothnia). In the Viking and Crusade Periods the *finnar* or *finni* of Scandinavian sources usually referred to inhabitants of northern Finland (Lapps or Saami), whereas the *finlander* of Swedish sources referred to people in the south-west.[4] Variations of the name *tavester* were used for people who lived further inland. The Finnish name that corresponds to Tavastland is *Häme*, the south-western

[1] See Roeck Hansen 1991 and Ringbom 1991 pp. 49–81.
[2] Sjöstrand 1994 pp. 550–53.
[3] Salo 2003 pp. 13–91, Huurre 1986 pp. 151–54.
[4] Gallén 1984 pp. 252–54. For Lapps and Saami (not necessarily synonymous) see Aikio 1984 pp. 82–83, Huurre and Keränen pp. 146–49, 316–23, and Lehtosalo-Hilander and Pirinen 1988 pp. 275–85.

region being *Suomi*.[5] Norwegian sources also mention *Kvenland* and *kvenir* (lowlanders?), who lived somewhere on the route from Hälsingland to 'Finland'.[6] In Russian sources we find *sum* and *jem*, although the location of the latter is not always clear.[7] Karelia first appears in Russian sources in 1143, as *Korela*, probably originally the name of a settlement on the site of Käkisalmi (Sw. Keksholm, Rus. Priozjorsk).[8] In the twelfth century there were three distinct regions of relatively dense settlement, south-western Finland and southern Satakunta (around the Kokemäki river as far as Pyhäjärvi), the region around the Vanajavesi-Pyhäjärvi lake system and Lake Päijänne, and the northern and western shores of Lake Ladoga. These corresponded to (Varsinais-)Suomi, Häme and Karelia. The first two regions were called Finland ('Egentliga Finland') and Tavastland by the Swedes.

It has often been assumed that the three settlement regions were occupied by distinct 'tribes' or peoples, perhaps comparable with the *svear* and east and west *götar* of Sweden, also mentioned in foreign sources long before they appeared in the historical records of Sweden itself.[9] Contemporary documents that mention Tavastland or Finland, *tavaster* and *finlander* can suggest this, without specifically indicating political unity. The reference to *tavesti nacio* by Pope Gregory IX in his crusade bull of 1237 gives a stronger impression, but *nacio* does not mean 'nation' in the modern sense, nor was the papal chancellery necessarily acquainted with the realities of Crusade Period Finland.[10] Whereas the different *land* of the *svear* and *götar* had their own assemblies and laws by the time written sources appear from Sweden itself, which suggests that the distinctions made by earlier external sources were valid, there is no record of such institutions in Finland. Although they are very limited, it is perhaps noteworthy that few foreign sources refer to any Finnish leaders as 'kings' or 'princes', such as those among the Slavs and Balts of the southern

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[5] The origin of the name *suomi* is uncertain, but *häme* is cognate with *saami*, in origin a Baltic loanword meaning (people of) the interior (inland): Häkkinen 1996 pp. 156–57.

[6] Egils saga 4. See Vilkuna 1957.

[7] Kirkinen 1984 p. 167.

[8] On the origin of the name and possible Scandinavian connections, see Saarikivi 2003 p. 491.

[9] For a recent example, see Jokipii 2003b p. 41.

[10] DS 298 (ST 86, FMU 82).

Baltic coast. The reference to kings of the *kvenir* in *Egils Saga* might be taken as an exception, but this is suspect, as Icelandic saga writers liked their heroes to play havoc with foreign kings and their daughters.[11]

It might also be argued that the accounts in the Novgorod chronicles of *jem* raids on Karelia and Ingria and Karelian raids on Häme demonstrate that considerable numbers of men could be assembled as 'armies', but this does not necessarily demonstrate permanent political authority, as many tribal or even more politically fragmented societies have been able to organise combined forces under temporary leadership. Nor does the designation *jem* (Fin. *häme, hämäläiset*) or 'Karelians' necessarily mean that all the villages of these regions were involved in these operations. During the Middle Ages the Finns frequently appointed leaders, often termed 'kings' (*kuninkaat*) amongst themselves, for different types of combined expeditions, whether for hunting, fishing, raiding, or, in the Swedish period, rebelling.[12] The fourteenth-century 'Cuningas de Rapalum' ('King of Rapola') should be seen in this light. The Swedish authorities attempted to suppress this practice, particularly after the peasant revolt of 1438, known as the 'David Uprising', but apparently still expected the Finns to organise themselves for defence in the war with Muscovy in 1495–96.[13]

Evidence for the location of Iron Age settlements in Finland comes mainly from identified cemeteries, some of which are near village sites today.[14] Iron Age farming communities were restricted to light soil areas which could be ploughed using the technology of the day. The heavy clay soils of regions further to the north and east could not be turned with the simple ard, and were occupied only with the expansion of burn-beat farming in the Swedish period. The origin of the Crusade Period settlement pattern appears to lie in an expansion of farming communities from south-western Finland into Häme via the Eura district in Satakunta, which had occurred during the period 600–1000. The spread of settlement is generally attributed to population growth within Finland. Only in the Roman Iron Age and the Merovingian (Vendel) period just after 600 AD is there a sufficient

[11] It may also refer to the 'kings' (*kuninkaat*) elected by the Finns themselves for various purposes—see below.

[12] A similar practice was recorded among the Kuronians and Estonians.

[13] For example, see FMU 4627 and FMU 4651.

[14] Huurre 1995 pp. 124–36, H.-P. Schulz 1992 pp. 518–19. Far fewer prehistoric or early medieval village sites have been found than cemeteries.

break in the archaeological record to suggest a large-scale influx of people from overseas, probably mostly from Svealand, rather than cultural change due to import of goods and influence.[15] Allowing for this immigration, which affected Satakunta and Häme more than Varsinais-Suomi, the Iron Age society of Häme was in origin no more than an extension of that in Varsinais-Suomi. Certain modern authorities, such as Matti Huurre, have suggested that even in the Crusade Period the difference between Varsinais-Suomi and Häme was not so great as to indicate separate cultures.

By the early Viking Period settlement had expanded to the east of Lake Päijänne. Cemeteries with artefacts of western Finnish type from c. 800 have been found at Mikkeli in Savo, and on the western shore of Lake Ladoga, a region well situated on trade routes, subsequently spreading up the shore as far as to Käkisalmi and beyond. Modern archaeologists suggest that Finnish immigrants probably merged with an existing but sparse Finnic-speaking population that was already in Karelia.[16] In this period there was also Scandinavian settlement in the Ladoga region. For unknown reasons cemeteries (settlement?) ceased in southern Ostrobothnia and eastern and central Uusimaa by the tenth century. After the Viking Period (c. 800–1050) settlement remained concentrated in three distinguishable areas: southwest Finland, the region around Lakes Päijänne and Vanaja, and the region west of Lake Ladoga, and it is these that correspond to the Scandinavian and Russian 'tribal' names.

In Finland and Karelia conspicuous grave monuments such as monumental mounds, buildings of exceptionally large size or assemblages of these, considered possible central places, are absent. Admittedly there has not been any systematic attempt to identify other possible indicators of power, but there is currently no sign of the transformation from tribe or chieftaincy to proto-state that occurred in Scandinavia. One site that was obviously a trading centre is Varikkoniemi, on the east shore of Vanajavesi, with finds that date to between the 9th and 13th centuries.[17] It is situated at the centre of the Vanaja (western) settlement area of Häme, and at the eastern

[15] Meinander 1978 p. 10. Salo also thinks that the two *Tuuna*-named settlements of Laitila and Valko-Soukainen have links with the Iron Age Svealand *tuna*-organisation. See Salo 2003 pp. 76–78.

[16] Saksa 1998 pp. 194–96.

[17] E.-L. Schulz 1992 pp. 507–16.

end of the medieval *härkätie* (ox-road), which began near Åbo. The settlement had a ditch and possibly a palisade, and its size was greater than the norm in Crusade Period Finland. Both the settlement site and the nearby cemetery revealed a greater variety of artefacts than other cemeteries. On this basis, Hans-Peter Schulz believes that it was a regional centre,[18] but it is difficult to know whether it was a political as well as a cultural centre, as there is no obvious sign that it was also a chieftain's residence. Schulz himself suggests that it was a socio-political centre only for the villages in the immediate vicinity. Taipaleensaari in the Karelian Isthmus also appears to have been a (seasonal?) trading centre, but this was not central to settlement. It is possible that Tiurin Linnasaari (just to the south) fulfilled a similar function to Taipaleensaari before it was fortified at some stage in the late thirteenth century, probably as a response to attacks by Swedes (and/or Finns) after the construction of Viborg in 1293.[19] There is no question that social stratification existed in Viking and Crusade Period Finland, as indicated by grave finds, but this evidence indicates that the difference in wealth between the lower and upper strata was greater in the earlier Merovingian Period.

Grave finds tell us nothing of ecological conditions, although farming implements have been found in burials from all periods of the Iron Age. Palaeo-botanic studies indicate an economy based on wheat, barley and rye growing supplemented by stock-rearing, fishing and wilderness utilisation, for which the main evidence is numerous finds of strike-a-lights in the forest regions. Pollen analysis suggests that a transition from burn-beat to field farming was accelerated in the eighth century, the latter becoming predominant in south-west Finland and western Häme during the Viking Period. Although fixed settlement is a mark of both farming methods, field farming would encourage its concentration into larger communities. An apparent drop in the number of cemeteries within Häme during the Viking and early Crusade Periods probably indicates that settlement was becoming more concentrated rather than diminishing, reflecting a movement from extended kin group settlements to larger villages. It is possible that greater equality developed alongside the growth of village communities, although these villages were generally small, consisting of

[18] H.-P. Schulz 1992 pp. 525–26.
[19] Saksa, Uino and Hiekkanen 2003 pp. 406–12.

only a few houses.[20] In the Lake Päijänne region and further east burn-beat remained the main method of cultivation.

Of the sites from the Finnish Crusade Period, only the hill-forts are conspicuous nowadays, as natural features rather than man-made structures. The situation is confused by the many features named 'muinaislinna' ('ancient fort') or the like that may not have been forts at all.[21] According to Taavitsainen, there are seventy hill-forts within the present-day boundaries of Finland, and a further twenty-five in Karelia, of which thirty-six have been investigated. It is difficult to argue that widespread hill-fort construction was anything other than a response to the threat of violence, whatever additional functions the forts may have acquired. Forts could have many functions: as assembly places for offensive military action, homes for garrisons or refuges. The size of forts in Finland and Karelia varies from 600 to 9000 square metres, with the exception of Rapola (Sääksmäki), which has an area of over five hectares. Its sheer size led some to see it as a possible centre of Häme, but no Iron Age cultural layer has been found there or in any other hill-fort, contrary to some of those in Estonia. There are few signs of possible buildings or household equipment. Forts in the wilderness may have been mustering places, but the purpose of those near settlements is more difficult to establish.

Dating the hill-forts has proved difficult, as many of the finds, such as coarse-ware pottery, spiral bracelets and pennanular brooches may have been in use for a considerable period. At only three forts is there a clear continuity from the Merovingian to the end of the Crusade Period, although there is more from the Viking to Crusade Periods.[22] At the few sites where construction materials can be dated, many of the artefacts found appear to be of earlier date. Taavitsainen concluded that these had been taken from elsewhere and re-used, due to their fragmented and often burnt condition, and took the latest dates of cremated objects and datings of intact objects as indicators that most of the forts were in use during the late Viking and Crusade Periods, the same period in which we know there was

[20] Huurre 1995 pp. 173–96, 215–19; H.-P. Schulz 1992 p. 523.

[21] On the hill-forts of 'Kalanti', see Luoto 2003 pp. 171–84 (especially pp. 182–84). At twenty-one of the sixty-four sites in Luoto's overview there is nothing but the name and popular tradition to identify them as forts, and thirty others may simply have been watch posts.

[22] Taavitsainen 1994 pp. 127–33.

military activity.[23] Evidence for Viking activity in Finland is limited to a few saga references and we have no knowledge of internal conflict.

There is no evidence that there was a 'system' of Finnish hill-forts, or that individual forts corresponded to specific settlements. The majority of forts were constructed on outcrops of bedrock, some of which were islands, and some forts were constructed on ridges. In settled areas such as Sysmä east of Lake Päijänne, where there were none of these features, there were no forts. Early theories of a defensive 'chain' of forts, perhaps with the capability of signalling from one to the next, are unconvincing. Schulz argues that the forts in the Vanaja region were situated around the perimeter of the settlement area, and could therefore have functioned as a defensive ring, but there would not have been sufficient manpower to garrison them properly, although they may well have been situated to act as watch posts in addition to other functions. His argument that they could not have been refuges, because there were marshes or rivers between them and the settlements, only holds good if it is assumed that the villagers had to flee to them at very short notice—the inaccessibility of a refuge from the settlement area was an advantage from the point of view of those hoping to avoid enemy depredation, particularly to locals who knew the routes through rough terrain.[24] Their ability to escape depended on sufficient warning of enemy approach.

Although most forts are near concentrations of finds or cemeteries that could indicate settlement, some are outlying, and perhaps functioned as watch posts and mustering sites for raids. The construction of the Finnish forts need not have required any great effort, and their defence no great numbers, especially if the enemy were raiders. Walls were built from local materials, and inaccessible approaches were often left undefended, as at Kapatuosia (Hollola).

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[23] Taavitsainen 1994 p. 133. Uino has questioned Taavitsainen's assumptions about the re-use of objects, but there is no dispute that the forts of both Häme and Karelia were in use during the Crusade Period: Uino 1997 pp. 77–90.

[24] H.-P. Schulz 1992 p. 522. Schulz also points out that the forts are on a straight line (if looked at on a modern map), and suggests that this is too much to be a coincidence, but it is not quite clear what he is suggesting by this—a cultic function, perhaps? To build them on a line would not be necessary from any practical point of view, although building them within sight of each other might be. It may be noted that in any case the Vanaja water and lake system follows an approximately straight route south-south-east to north-north-west.

Our main source of evidence for hostilities is the *Chronicle of Novgorod*. According to this, *jem* and Karelians raided each other in 1142–43, and Karelians joined with Novgorod in raiding Häme in 1226.[25] Karelia was also threatened by the Swedes in the late thirteenth century, but Häme, like the settlements around Ladoga, may have been threatened by 'varjager' and Rus before this, demanding tribute or simply plundering. The majority of Karelian forts are north-west of Ladoga, which suggests that they may have been built by northern Karelians as a counter to Rus and later Novgorodian 'tribute-gathering', rather than attacks from Häme. Numbers for military forces given in medieval sources are notoriously unreliable, but those recorded in the Novgorod chronicle are not large, varying from 400 to an exceptionally high 2000. The size of early and high medieval armies in both western Europe and Russia was in any case small, numbering hundreds or low thousands. Many raiding forces, which would include those of Finns or Karelians if the forts of Finland and Karelia were designed partly to counter these, would be smaller still.

In the past, on the assumption that each hill-fort might have corresponded to one, archaeologists such as Meinander and the ethnographer Kustaa Vilkuna tried to reconstruct prehistoric socio-political units. Inspired in part by similar hypotheses of Swedish archaeologists, Meinander thought that the medieval parish (*pitäjä*) might have derived from prehistoric Finnish tribal organisation, but there is no evidence for this, although, as in the case of Sweden, some correspondence between ecclesiastical administrative districts and settlement concentrations is to be expected. Vilkuna used Estonian data as evidence, which is not necessarily valid for Finland.[26] By the treaty of Nöteborg in 1323 Sweden acquired former Novgorodian districts, which it named *gislalagh* (Fin. *kihlakunta*).[27] The word implies a district for hostage-giving or tribute-gathering, and was used as a translation of the Novgorodian *pogosta*. By the mid-fourteenth century Swedish Savo-Karelia was organised into parishes. Vilkuna argued that the Finnish *pitäjä* (parish) may have had a similar origin to that of Savo-Karelia, as a *kihlakunta*. In Estonia the equivalent term,

[25] Chron. Nov. pp. 17–20.
[26] Vilkuna 1964.
[27] Nöteborg is the Swedish name; it was Orekhovets in Russian and Pähkinäsaari in Finnish.

kihelkond, came to mean parish, but there is no good evidence for any pre-Swedish district organisation in Finland, or in Karelia before the *pogosta*. The population of Finland was certainly much lower than the 120,000–180,000 estimate for thirteenth-century Estonia, made on the basis of Danish tax records.[28] Furthermore, some of the Estonian forts (*maalinnad*) were occupied permanently, possibly by an elite that dominated a region approximating to the *kihelkond*, as implied by Heinrich of Livonia.[29]

Hoards of valuable objects have been found all over Finland, with no particular concentration in any one settlement region. Their distribution mirrors that of the hill-forts and cemeteries in a general sense, but only rarely is there direct correspondence. Hoarding may have been a response to enemy threat, but it has also been interpreted as storage. Items manufactured locally and in everyday use may provide a better indication of shared identity, but only brooches have survived in sufficient numbers. Brooch styles suggest that Häme was a region where Karelian and Finnish styles met, the former predominating in the east, rather than a region with an identity of its own.[30] Studies of both dialect and place-name evidence have also suggested an eastern admixture in Päijät-Häme, but when and how this occurred is very difficult to establish.[31]

In his article of 1933, Tallgren suggested that sites including the place-name component *moisio*, often linked with manors in the later Middle Ages, might have originated as chieftains' residences, and that *hiisi* sites indicated pagan sacred places.[32] There is some evidence for continuity in use of *moisio*-sites (see below), but the 'evidence' for prehistoric use of *hiisi*-sites consists largely of oral tradition. Since evidence for religiosity other than burial practices is virtually non-existent, archaeologists and ethnographers have frequently had recourse to local tradition and folk poetry, most of which was collected in the nineteenth century. Despite the undoubted preservation of ancient features such as shamanistic practices in some of the poems, the periodisation adopted by redaction analysts is necessarily vague;

[28] Selirand 1983 p. 147.
[29] Kriiska and Tvauri 2002 pp. 208–10.
[30] Taavitsainen 2000 pp. 19–29.
[31] Itkonen 1972 pp. 85–112 (especially pp. 93–111).
[32] Tallgren 1933 pp. 319–31. '*Hiisi*' could mean 'spirit' or minor deity, but later (presumably in the Christian period) acquired the meaning of 'evil spirit' or 'devil'.

Kuusi's 'Middle Kalevala Period', for instance, includes the whole of the later Iron Age, from the Migration to the Crusade Periods.[33] Similarities between tales in these poems and those related by Saxo, Snorri Sturluson and their contemporaries suggests strong links between Finland and pre-Christian Scandinavia. It is possible that the authority of local chieftains in Finland may have encompassed both cultic and judicial functions, as suggested in recent work on Norway and Sweden.

12.2. *The Christianisation of Finland*

Historians and archaeologists now agree that the Christianisation of Finland was a very long process, lasting several centuries. There may have been an element of force in the conversion, but Varsinais-Suomi and Karelia were both part of a Baltic trade network that had existed before the Viking Period. There is a wealth of evidence for close links between western and south-western coastal regions of Finland and Sweden and the Gulf of Finland was one route by which goods travelled between Russia and Scandinavia. This route became more regulated as Novgorod's power over the Russian outlets increased, and grew in importance as the land and river routes through the former Baltic and Estonian regions were obstructed by the conquests of the Sword Brothers around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the late twelfth century a trade agreement was made with the Swedes and Germans of Gotland, whose traders subsequently acquired their own quarter of Novgorod. The Neva was the river-link between the Gulf and Ladoga.

The Crusade Period brought an end to cremation in western Finland, albeit by a slow process, probably due to influence from Sweden and the already Christianised Åland Islands. Evidence of

[33] See, for instance, Kuusi, Bosley and Branch 1977 pp. 42–45. Folk poetry can provide general evidence of belief systems, but even this has to be related to other evidence to establish a wide relative chronology like that of Kuusi. Such poems cannot, however, be used as evidence of actual 'historical events', even when certain personal or place-names can be linked to them, as there are too many influences from successive generations of singers and overlays of different cultures. The poetry itself tells us this, as several versions of the same tale often give the central characters different names. Unfortunately, this has not prevented some Finnish historians from using it in this way.

structures that may well have been bell-towers, on the Swedish model, has been found at Myllymäki (Nousiainen) and Ristinpelto (Lieto) cemeteries in Varsinais-Suomi and Kirkailanmäki (Hollola) in Päijät-Häme.[34] The first Christian artefacts were buried as grave goods.[35] This implies use of Christian symbols rather than conversion. Cremation burial was gradually displaced by inhumation, and after 1150 by inhumation without grave goods, a clearer indication of Christian practice. In some cemeteries in the Turku region, burial with grave goods seems to have been followed by an intermediate period of burial with only costume accessories as goods. The latest coin from the cemetery of Taskula (Maaria) was struck between 1135 and 1154, and was still associated with grave goods.[36] A man was buried with a sword at Rikala (Halikonlahti), in a cemetery with a coin dated to 1167–95. By the thirteenth century burials with pagan signatures had virtually disappeared from Varsinais-Suomi and Satakunta, but the picture is not consistent. Moreover, cremation burials were revived by those who used the cemetery of Myllymäki in the early part of that century.

The earliest shift to Christian burial practices probably occurred in the region north of this, the Eura-Yläne-Kalanti region. In Eura weapon burial apparently ceased early in the twelfth century, but burial in costumes with brooches continued for some decades. In Yläne and the Kalanti-Laitila area burial with goods of any sort seems to have disappeared even before this. The pattern of change has been less easy to chart in the region to the east of this, although there is one inhumation cemetery coin-dated to the period 1106–25 at Vilusenharju (Tampere).[37] In Vanajan Häme to the south another (Narva Rukoushuone, Vesilahti) has been dated to the last quarter of the twelfth century.[38] Paula Purhonen believes that the absence of any evidence for an intermediate phase of burial with costume parts in Häme indicates a more sudden change from fully furnished to unfurnished burials that may be associated with an enforced change, perhaps the military expedition of *Erikskrönikan*.[39] The evidence for early church building by wealthy farmers is also restricted

[34] Purhonen 1998 p. 135.
[35] Purhonen 1998 pp. 112–14.
[36] Purhonen 1998 p. 137.
[37] Sarvas 1972 p. 123.
[38] Sarvas 1972 p. 124.
[39] Purhonen 1998 p. 137.

to the regions of Varsinais-Suomi and Satakunta, where Christianity was established earlier.

Christian objects became common in Finland in the Crusade Period, particularly cross pendants of various types. Although these are thought to have affirmed the wearer's faith in the region of manufacture, this cannot be certain in Finland. Nevertheless, their distribution in Varsinais-Suomi generally corresponds to that of inhumation burials. All the pendants come from the Baltic region, and most from Scandinavia, especially Gotland.[40] Burial datings have been made largely on the basis of coin finds, with the assistance of a relative chronology based on brooch styles. Artefacts from Gotland found their way to Karelia as well, but Crusade Period settlement in the region between Päijät-Häme and Karelia was very sparse. There are two known cemeteries in the Mikkeli region. Evidence of a structure that was a possibly a chapel or bell tower has been found at both.[41] At Visulahti a bracteate dated to 1265–1346 was unearthed, and at both late ring brooches indicate use in the thirteenth century, if not earlier.[42]

12.3. *Early Swedish penetration of Finland*

Movement across the Gulf of Bothnia occurred long before the High Middle Ages, but the extent of any settlement is always difficult to assess from archaeological evidence. On the whole, after the Neolithic era cultural influence moved from west to east, and was particularly strong in the Bronze Age and the Merovingian Period. This may have involved movement of people from Sweden to Finland, and possibly, in the later Iron Age, intermittent payments of tribute to kings in Svealand, but any attempt at conquest seems improbable. During the Viking Period it appears that Scandinavians showed much more interest in Ladoga and the river trade routes to the south, conduits for silver and other valuable goods. Written evidence for Viking activity in the east is lacking, since this region was occupied by Finnic, Baltic and Slavic speaking tribes without any written culture,

[40] Purhonen 1998 pp. 112–14.
[41] Purhonen 1998 pp. 123–25.
[42] Lehtosalo-Hilander and Pirinen 1988 pp. 193–96.

rather than more complex polities such as the English and Frankish kingdoms encountered by Vikings who went west. As noted, the strongest influence from Svealand is evident in Satakunta at certain times in the Iron Age. Unto Salo made a case that origin of the Finnish name Satakunta (Fin. *sata*—hundred, *kunta*—group of people) was to be found in the Swedish *hundare* district organisation. This is quite possible, although it is impossible to determine when this might have been adopted in Kalanti-Kainuu. Salo's suggestion that the *kihlakunta* also originated as a centenary division is more tenuous.[43]

An incentive for military intervention in northern pagan regions was provided by the bull *Divina Dispensatione*, issued by Pope Eugene III in 1147. The idea of war for religious ends was extended to the Baltic, with a grant of the same privileges and full remission of sins given to those going to the Holy Land. Encouraged by success against the Wends, successive Popes urged a continuing crusade against other heathens in the Baltic. Even before this, in the Florence document of c. 1120, referring to the dioceses of Sweden, *Findia* and *Hestia* were listed alongside several other mission dioceses, Guthlandia (Gotland), Guarandia (Värend), Guarmelande (Värmland) and Teuste (Tiust). During the last half century scholars have been virtually unanimous in agreeing that 'Findia' is Finland and 'Hestia' Estonia.[44] Pope Alexander III's 'Gravus admodum' letter of 1171, urging the Swedes to establish a more permanent presence in Finland to prevent the Finns from apostasising, suggests that expeditions had already been made. The letter, which exists only as a later copy, is one of a batch sent to Sweden in 1169–71, urging the Swedes to strengthen the (universal) Church in various ways. Unfortunately it does not tell us who had made expeditions to Finland. While it is probably going too far to see the letter only as propaganda in the Pope's dispute with Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa, it is possible that the Danes, who had taken Friedrich's side, were also active in Gulf of Finland, and that Alexander preferred the Swedes, who were more supportive of him, to take the lead in conversion of the Baltic pagans.[45] He

[43] Salo 2000 pp. 114–28.

[44] See, for instance, Gallén 1958 p. 19, Jaakkola 1958 p. 48 and Nyberg 1991–92 pp. 153–89, pp. 160–61, 178. The discoverer of the Florence manuscript in 1913, Sven Tunberg, thought *Findia* was Finveden and *Guarandia* Gästrikland, but this has since been rejected.

[45] The context of the Pope's dispute with Emperor Freidrich, which was not resolved until 1176, has been emphasised in Korpela 1994 pp. 413–28.

may also have been worried about Russian influence in Finland. On the other hand, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Alexander was referring to Russian activity when talking of the apostasy, since relations between the Orthodox and the western Church had not yet reached the low point that they would a century later, as evidenced by the numerous twelfth-century marriages between Scandinavian and Russian nobility.[46] In 1171 papal relations with Kiev were better than those with the Empire.

Had the apostasy alluded to by Alexander occurred after an expedition to convert the Finns led by Erik Jedvardsson? Bernard of Clairvaux's ideas on the justification and necessity for conversion by the sword probably spread to Sweden with the establishment of Cistercian monasteries during the reign of Sverker I,[47] but it may have taken longer for them to truly become part of aristocratic culture. Nevertheless, even in recent decades, although some historians have had serious doubts, there has been a general tendency to accept that an expedition of exceptional size must have taken place in Erik's reign, simply because so many sources tell of it, but all of them are much later than the supposed crusade.[48] Unto Salo has recently tried to find other evidence that it probably took place. His argument is based on hypotheses about the size of the original 'mission diocese', Muinais-Kalanti. According to this, Nousiainen (Sw. Nousis) and Mynämäki were removed from (Varsinais-) Suomi for a period, probably as a result of the first crusade, and linked to Kalanti as part of Sweden's sphere of influence. The later inclusion of Suomi in the diocese was one of the reasons why its centre moved from Nousiainen to Koroinen in 1229–30.[49] There certainly was a mission diocese in the twelfth century, at least in the eyes of the Church, as witnessed by the Florence document, but Salo's boundary changes, if they occurred, are impossible to date accurately. Archaeological datings are not precise enough to attribute changes in burial practice to the reign of Erik Jedvardsson, and it is questionable whether the sites mentioned in folk poems about St Henrik, who supposedly accompanied Erik, were related to mission activities in the 1150s or simply to the area where his legend took form.

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[46] Lind 1992b pp. 225–63.
[47] Heikkila 2005 p. 66.
[48] See, for instance, Heikkila 2005 p. 56.
[49] Salo 2003 pp. 84–91.

As noted in Chapter 11:3, the extant legend of St Erik was written in an age of warrior-saints, who showed their Christian virtues not only by following the *via regia* but by launching military campaigns to spread the faith. In addition, the text of the legend dates to 1344, long after the reign of Erik Jedvardsson. Even if it reached approximately that form in the late thirteenth century, this is still over a century after the supposed crusade, and at a time when such a justification for the extension of Swedish control over Finland would have been useful.[50] There is no cause to doubt that Erik's cult went back to the twelfth century, but this is not evidence that he led a crusade. While an element of force cannot be ruled out, there is no reason why Christianisation should not have taken place without it. One interesting aspect of the written evidence for twelfth-century military activities in Finland, if the legends of Erik and Henrik can be classed as such, is that none of it suggests conquest and absorption of part of Finland into the Swedish kingdom.

Having cast doubt on the 'crusade' of Erik's legend, it is quite possible that a seaborne military expedition of some sort took place in his reign, since we have records of several similar near-contemporary expeditions in the *First Chronicle of Novgorod* and other sources.[51] Apart from Salo, a number of historians have assumed that some truth must lie behind the legend, even if the original event was no more than a plundering expedition rather than a crusade.[52] Discussions of whether Erik had the ability to launch such an expedition have often been unnecessarily confused by the question of whether the *ledung* fleet that lay behind the taxes of the Svealand law-codes had been established by his reign, but fleets could have and had been raised by Scandinavian kings and nobles for centuries before this, and the service period of three months referred to in the *landskapslagar* applies to the patrol fleet, not the *ledung* that was taken overseas.

The 'first crusade' became associated not only with King Erik, but with Bishop Henrik. A source of 1344 says that Erik and his

[50] See, for instance, Suvanto 1987 p. 156.

[51] See Chapter 7:3.

[52] For instance, Anthoni 1968 p. 170, and Pirinen 1991. The latter states that it must have been a crusade because the legend dates to Knut Eriksson's reign (p. 42), and such a tale could not have been invented so early. More reasonable is the attitude taken by Sjöstrand 1996 p. 22, who at least suggests that the reality behind the legend may well have been a pillaging expedition.

fleet set out for Finland with St Henrik, Bishop of Uppsala.[53] The fifteenth-century *Legenda nova* states that Nicholas Breakspear brought Henrik with him to Sweden in 1153, and made him bishop at Uppsala, where he served for two years before he went to Finland.[54] Henrik was also said to be English in later sources, perhaps because of this link with Nicholas. According to the Finnish *Catalogus episcoporum*, Henrik was the first bishop of Åbo. It also lists several successors, none of whom are known from elsewhere. This chronicle is a problematical source. It has three identifiable parts, the earliest of which is thought to have originated around the turn of the fourteenth century, which survives as the Palmskiöld fragment.[55] The only full version was printed in the 1570s by Paulus Juusten, and it has recently been suggested that he had a much greater influence on its content than was previously supposed.[56] In the fifteenth-century Palmskiöld fragment, the first crusade is dated to 1150 and Henrik is said to have met his death in Köyliö in the following year. Unfortunately this Bishop Henrik has been impossible to identify in any twelfth-century Swedish sources, and no bishop is recorded as having died during this period.

It is highly improbable that Henrik was a mission bishop from Hamburg-Bremen or Lund, as his tradition is weak in Germany and weaker in Denmark than it is in Sweden. The day of his death was celebrated not only at Åbo, but throughout medieval Sweden, at Uppsala, Västerås, Skara, Strängnäs, Linköping and Växjö. In the last three places his festival was one of the most important, possibly an indication that Henrik had a close association with Linköping.[57] However, the Brigittine movement of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries could well be responsible for the widespread honouring of Henrik in this see, since much Henrik material was preserved in Vadstena, the parent nunnery of Naantali in Varsinais-Suomi.[58] When

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[53] FMU 109.

[54] Maliniemi 1942 pp. 346–54. The *Legenda* also claims that Henrik was Bishop of Åbo, but this is certainly propaganda.

[55] Jaakkola 1962 pp. 18–73.

[56] Heininen 1989.

[57] In Åbo and Växjö the festival day was 20 January, but in the other dioceses it was 19 January, possibly because the 20th was already the feast day of other saints. See Schmid 1934 pp. 141, 216, and on the death poem and Henrik's legend, Jokipii 2003a pp. 326–33.

[58] Heikkila 2006 p. 114.

the Henrik cult was at its height, in the fifteenth century, there were some thirty versions of the legend. Heikkila makes a strong case for its development in Varsinais-Suomi during the last decades of the thirteenth century, since it appears that the cult (the Latin miracle collection) was already strong and widely circulated when it was adopted in Turku at the end of the century, but there is no record of it from the twelfth century.[59] The first known *patronus* of the cathedral was the Virgin Mary, but she was superceded by 1296, when Henrik is mentioned by Pope Boniface.[60] Relics had been moved to Turku by 1309, but some remained in Nousiainen.[61] It is possible that a burial in the centre of the wooden structure that preceded the stone church of Nousiainen was that of Henrik, whatever he actually did. No conclusion on the veracity of Henrik's association with Erik can be drawn from the various legends, folk poems and pieces of liturgy that concern them, some of which mention both of them and some only one, as they are all of a much later date than the supposed crusade.

Given Henrik's undoubted place in medieval Finnish liturgy and art, not to mention the oral tradition (*surmavirta*—lit. 'murder poem') of his martyrdom at the hands of a peasant convert named Lalli, Finnish historians and archaeologists have tended to accept a reality behind the legend. How much reality there was is another matter—it would have been quite possible, for instance, for a martyr churchman to be 'promoted to bishop' as his legend spread, especially if he was originally associated only with a particular location, and for his legend to become associated with Erik's 'crusade'. The *surmavirta* is even more difficult to date than the legend, since the earliest

[59] Heikkila 2006 pp. 79–80. The fullest version of the Henrik legend, which includes a number of loans from the Erik legend (pp. 190–93), was preserved at Turku. Henrik appears on the Åbo contraseal of 1300. Heikkila points out that one of Henrik's miracles involved a Franciscan friar, which would mean that it originated after 1220 (see pp. 147–53 for Heikkila's discussion of the miracle collection, which forms the second part of Henrik's legend, after the *vita*). He also points out that the thirteenth century was the period of greatest development for local saints in Sweden, as well as the period of development for Finland's diocese (pp. 234–35). He does warn, however, that absence of evidence for the cult's existence earlier does not constitute proof that it did not exist then. Some have suggested that the Henrik legend developed as a 'Finnish' counterpart to the Erik legend: see Krötzl 2004 p. 193 and Jokipii 1989 p. 93.

[60] FMU 221 (REA 18).

[61] FMU 259, Gallen 1972 pp. 32–38, Heikkila 2006 p. 95.

written version comes from the seventeenth century. On the grounds that the tale makes so much of Henrik's association with the region of Nousiainen and Köyliö, the 'original poem' of Henrik's death has sometimes been dated before the translation of his relics from Nousiainen to Turku, but several historians have emphasised that Nousiainen was still regarded as his resting place even in 1300.[62] The extant versions of the poem contain different sections that do not hang together well, and the introduction telling of Erik's and Henrik's youth and the crusade was clearly added later.[63] There is very little ecclesiastical matter in it, but the legend does not incorporate much from the poem either—the central characters, such as Lalli and his wife, for instance, are missing.

Early attempts to date Erik's crusade were made on the basis of the Henrik legend, in which he became bishop of Uppsala in 1148 and went to Finland two years later, but more recent historians have proposed several other dates.[64] Jaakkola concluded that the 'crusade' must have taken place in 1155. It is now fairly certain that Erik was not elected king until the following year, though nobles owned their own fleets and even in the later *landskapslagar* the overseas fleet could be led by anyone appointed by king or jarl, but the date is no more than a guess. Other proposed dates are 1157 and 1158, the middle of Erik's reign.[65] Pirinen and Lindkvist have both suggested that the last date was the earliest that Erik had a sufficient grip on power to launch such an expedition, but this assumes that it was an effort involving the whole realm, even if sufficient was known of Erik's reign to make this judgement.[66] Unfortunately, there is insufficient evidence to make a good case for any of the suggested datings.

Token demands for acceptance of the Christian faith had been demanded by various Scandinavian expeditions whose main object appears to have been plunder and tribute, including those of Sigurd

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[62] See Haavio 1948 p. 222, on the former point, and Gallén 1972 pp. 33–38, on the latter. Haavio also linked aspects of the poem to the European chivalric tradition (p. 220). More recent historians have continued to argue that the *surmavirta* had a thirteenth-century (or earlier) origin: see, for instance, Jokipii 1989 pp. 113–120.

[63] Suvanto 1987 pp. 149–50.

[64] Apart from Cat. Episcoporum (Palmskiöld), the *Legenda Nova*, Cat. Episcoporum (Juusten) and Mikael Agricola's *Wsi Testamenti*.

[65] See Pirinen 1966 p. 28, Lindkvist and Ågren 1985 p. 12, Lehtonen 2002 p. 84. But see Vilkuna 2002 pp. 392–93.

[66] Pirinen 1991 pp. 43–46, Lindkvist 2001 pp. 49–66.

Jorsalfar in 1123 (to Småland) and the unnamed Swedish *dux* who went to Estonia in 1197.[67] In 1216 Innocent III sent a letter to King Erik Knutsson that referred to Finland as 'the land, which through his predecessors was snatched from the pagans'.[68] 'Predecessors' could refer to Erik's direct ancestors, Erik Jedvardsson and Knut Eriksson, as assumed, for instance, by Jokipii.[69] Although there are no extant records of any expedition by Knut, he did receive a papal letter in 1193, thanking him for having fought to expand the Church's influence eastwards, but this was in the context of a promise by Knut to mount an expedition in an effort to secure papal support for the annulment of his queen's vow of chastity.[70] Moreover, 'predecessors' could equally have referred to previous kings of the *Sverkerska ätten*. It is also quite possible that this formula derives from Erik himself, if the papal letter was a response to one from him, in which case it represents a Swedish claim to the territory.[71] Nor does the letter offer good evidence that the supposed activities of these kings were any more than raids which extracted promises from the natives to convert, or forced some of them to be baptised. The letter was an exhortation to Erik, and confirmed his kingship over the as yet unconquered regions, but the young king died soon afterwards. However, as noted in Chapter 7, an attempt was made to found a permanent base at Leal in Estonia four years later, but this ended in defeat. What lay behind the change in policy? Estonia was one of the bases of pirates who had raided Sweden in the past, and as the Danes had discovered earlier when attempting to end Wendish raids, retaliatory attacks brought only temporary respite, whereas subjection had ended the problem. Similarly, as observed by Alexander III, raids that produced promises to observe the Christian faith did not guarantee continued observance. But the expedition to Estonia can also be seen in another light, that of rivalry between Christian powers in the Baltic. During the period 1140–1220 others had been making conquests.

Following the eventual success of the campaign against the Wends, which established nominal Danish suzerainty over the coastal territories

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[67] HCL 1:13, p. 28.

[68] FMU I, 52; ST 64: *Ipsumque regnum ac terram, que clare memoriae predecessors pagarorum minibus extrorsaverunt.*

[69] Jokipii 2003a p. 316.

[70] DS 825. See Chapter 3:6.

[71] Krötzl 2003 pp. 17/21.

as far east as Rügen, Valdemar II had decided to intervene in Estonia, and the Danes captured Reval (Tallinn) in 1216. The majority of the territory of modern Estonia, however, had been conquered by the *Fratres Militie Christi de Livonia*, commonly known as the Sword Brothers. This order had been founded at Riga in 1202 on the initiative of a German bishop, Albrecht of Buxtehude, aware that he needed more than the assistance of German, Danish or Swedish crusaders who returned home after a season's campaigning. If the material rewards for those who campaigned on behalf of Christ in the Baltic were less than those in the Holy Land, there were plenty of opportunities for hardship and martyrdom. Unfortunately for the new Order and the crusade in Livonia, it was to face strong competition from crusades nearer to Germany, the main source of recruits. In 1217 Pope Honorius authorised the recruitment of crusaders to fight in Prussia, and in 1229 the Teutonic Order was invited to take control of a failing effort. Shortly after this, Honorius's successor, Gregory IX, authorised a crusade against an even closer foe, the rebellious peasants of Stedingen.

There may never have been more than 120 Sword Brothers, but these provided the core of armies composed of summer crusaders and Lettish tribesmen who were prepared to convert to the new faith in return for the opportunity to plunder and settle scores with old enemies, the Estonian-speaking tribes. Unlike the military orders founded to campaign in Palestine, the Sword Brothers had no lands or resources in the established kingdoms of Europe to call upon. Their future lay entirely in seizing and exploiting land in the eastern Baltic region.[72] This led them into conflict at various times with Bishop Albrecht, successive Popes and Valdemar II of Denmark, whose vassals they became in 1220. But in 1223 Valdemar was kidnapped by a vengeful Heinrich of Schwerin, whom he had dispossessed of his lands, and numerous recalcitrant vassals and enemies attempted to take advantage. Denmark lost control of the south Baltic coast and northern Estonia. Sweden's attempt to gain a foothold in Estonia having also failed in 1220, the Sword Brothers became its *de facto* rulers, and it was to them, in 1232, that the Pope made an appeal to launch a crusade into Finland.[73] Whether the Sword Brothers

[72] The Sword Brothers did not have churches and houses in Europe, like those of the Teutonic Order, to assist them in raising recruits.

[73] DS 276 (REA 9, ST 83, FMU 80).

had the resources to invade Finland while they were also endeavouring to control Estonia, fight the Lithuanians and Samogitians and stave off attempts by the new papal legate to reduce their power (see below) is debatable, but they might eventually have acted on the request had they not suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Samogitians on 22 September 1236, in which their master Folkwin and fifty-one knights died. This defeat forced its absorption into the richer and more respectable Teutonic Order, with which the Sword Brothers had already negotiated for union because of their limited resources.[74]

It seems possible that a bishop for Finland was created shortly after Andreas Sunesen received a bull authorising this in 1209.[75] Innocent III's letter authorised Andreas to choose someone who had been born outside wedlock, but he is not named. He may have been Danish or Swedish, given the extent of the province of Lund. Innocent also referred to Finland as 'newly converted' through the agency of some unnamed noblemen. Possibly, he is referring to the southern part of Varsinais-Suomi. Nothing is known of what came of this letter, or if the new bishop ever set foot in Finland. However, the Danes were certainly active in the eastern Baltic. According to Saxo, Knud Lavard raided in the eastern Baltic in the 1120s, in lands that belonged to the king of the Swedes—the account is suspect, but shows that Saxo believed some lands to be in the Swedish sphere when he was writing around the turn of the thirteenth century.[76] According to several annals the Danes made an expedition to Finland in 1191, led by Knud Valdemarsen.[77] This supposedly ended in victory for the Danes, but it may have obtained no more than temporary subjugation and achieved no more for the faith than previous expeditions. Other Danish incursions into Finland may have taken

[74] The Teutonic Order's representatives were not impressed with what they had seen in 1234, during these negotiations, and met with considerable difficulties once they attempted to absorb the former Sword Brothers in 1237–42. See Urban 1976 pp. 182–89. Unfortunately Urban's history is marred by a number of errors concerning people and events peripheral to his main theme—Birger Jarl Magnusson, for instance, becomes 'Earl Karl Birger'. For a more detailed discussion of the Sword Brothers and Finland, see Lind 2001a pp. 159–64.

[75] Bull *Ex tuarum*: DS 59 (FMU 48, DD I R 4B 161).

[76] *. . . culpatus a rege quod in re Suetica praedam egisset*: Saxo Grammaticus, 13:5, pp. 120–21.

[77] DMA, *Annales Sorani 1130–1300* p. 88, *Annales Ryenses* p. 166.

place in the early thirteenth century, but annal entries that record them are dubious.[78] In the early and mid-twentieth century a number of attempts were made to identify possible Danish bases on the south coast of Finland, but archaeological work carried out since then at some of the suggested sites, such as Sipoo (Sw. Sibbo) and Porvoo (Borgå), has revealed evidence of use during the unstable conditions of Albrecht of Mecklenburg's rule in the late fourteenth century, rather than Danish occupation in the early thirteenth.[79] Some place-names known from late medieval sources, such as Danskaby, also suggest Danish settlement, but there is no telling when or how this came about.[80] Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that the 1191 expedition took place.

The 1216 letter from Innocent III to Erik Knutsson, referred to above, marks the final establishment of Finland's bishopric, whose bishop is mentioned for the first time in 1221.[81] The king was asked to install one or two bishops under the authority of Uppsala. Kerkkonen suggested that the possibility of two bishops implied two mission areas. Possibly, Uusimaa was a Danish 'sphere of influence' in the decades around the turn of the thirteenth century, while Varsinais-Suomi was Sweden's sphere.[82] On the other hand, it may simply have been an invitation to the king and the archbishop of Uppsala to do as they thought fit to secure Finland for Christ. The appeal to Uppsala does not necessarily mean that Innocent III was no longer in favour of Lund or Denmark participating in the Christianisation of Finland; for the popes it was most important that more people were converted and that the authority of the Roman Church was extended, whoever assisted in this.

The first bishop's seat was Nousiainen, but it was moved between 1229 and 1232, either to Koroinen or directly to Turku, where it was later to remain.[83] It is not clear that this see was on a par with

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[78] See Ruuth 1968 pp. 61–72, for a 'source-critical' approach. The record of a Danish expedition to Prussia and Finland in 1210 in the so-called *Chronica Jutensis* (also known as *Continuatio compendii Saxonis* or *Chronica Danorum*) conflicts with that of *Annales Ryenses* (*Annals of Ryd*) and *Annales Ripenses* (*Annals of Ribe*), in which the expedition, presumably the same, is made to Prussia and Samogitia: see DMA pp. 166, 285.

[79] Rinne 1923 pp. 1–23.

[80] See G. Kerkkonen 1968 pp. 111–45.

[81] FMU 52 (ST 64), DS 206 (FMU 64, ST 69).

[82] G. Kerkkonen 1968 p. 136.

[83] Gallén 1978b p. 320.

those to the west until the late thirteenth century, since it is not referred to by the name of its bishop's seat until then, when it became the see of Åbo. Mid-thirteenth century papal letters that concern Finland were sent to the Bishop of Linköping and Gotland's leading churchmen, and a letter of 1241 written by Archbishop Jarler of Uppsala lists all the bishops of his province, but does not include a bishop of Finland.[84] As observed by Sjöstrand, it is therefore likely that Linköping had authority over Finland's bishop in this period. This ties in with Gotlandic trading contacts in Finland, for which there is good archaeological evidence. It is possible that Ericus Olai's reference to Bishop Kol of Linköping as *dux finlandie* can be seen in this context, even if the title 'dux' is inappropriate, as one normally applied to secular magnates.[85] Birger Jarl's son Bengt certainly bore this title in the reign of Magnus Ladulås.[86]

Whether the Swedes established a secular as well as an ecclesiastical presence in Varsinais-Suomi is a moot point, but it is possible that the hill-fort of Lieto was occupied by them at this time.[87] It is unlikely that further action was prevented by Erik Knutsson's death shortly after Innocent's letter was sent, since his successor, Johan Sverkersson, was apparently in the hands of the same advisors.[88] Little is known of the first bishop or his activities, but Varsinais-Suomi and Satakunta were to all intents and purposes already Christianised when the see was established. In the 1220s the bishop may already have been Thomas, but we have no knowledge of this. In Finnish historiography Thomas has assumed a stature out of all proportion to that warranted by the sources. The earliest written records of him record the transfer of two estates to his chaplain Vilhelm in 1234.[89] He is not heard of again until 1245, when he was forced to resign in extraordinary circumstances: he had forged a papal bull and caused someone to be mutilated and killed. Innocent IV gave the task of managing Thomas's resignation to Archbishop Jarler of Uppsala and the Dominican prior of Dacia, who were

[84] DS 305 (FMU 88).
[85] EOC 16, p. 72—*Anno Domini MCXCV Colo episcopus Lincopensis och dux Finlandie obiit.*
[86] Sjöstrand 1994 pp. 564–65.
[87] See Appendix A.2.1.3.
[88] See Chapter 3:9.
[89] DS 290, DS 291 (FMU 8, REA 10).

subsequently instructed to ensure that Thomas was maintained through the proceeds of ecclesiastical properties in Finland.[90] Thomas died three years later.[91] More information about Thomas appears in the Finnish *Catalogus episcoporum*, which claims that he was an English Dominican friar who had been a canon at Uppsala before he became bishop. However, the chronicle also insists that Thomas fled from Finland because of Russian and Kuronian fury, a claim that is flatly contradicted by the letter from Innocent IV and was clearly intended to show him in a better light.[92]

Even more so than the authors of the *Catalogus episcoporum*, two more modern Finnish historians have elaborated on Thomas's life and in doing so painted a highly imaginative picture of the see of Åbo in its early years. Jalmari Jaakkola represented the see as an independent principality run by Thomas, and Jouko Vahtola later claimed that there was a 'German period'.[93] Neither theory has as much to recommend it as Sjöstrand's concerning the see of Linköping. Vahtola's theory was built upon the Pope's appeal to the Sword Brothers in 1232, but neither this nor any other source indicates any

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[90] FMU 1, 88 (21 February 1245) and 89.

[91] ASMÆ, *Annales 1208–1288* p. 265.

[92] Cat. Episcoporum (Palmskiöld), p. 387: *Thomas Anglicus de ordine fratrum predicatorum Visby resedit tum propter anglicos illuc se transtulit tum meonum et ruthenorum furorem ibi obit anno domini MCCXLVIII*, and in Cat. Episcoporum (Juusten), p. 53: *Dominus Thomas, natione Anglicus, ordinis praedicatorum, prius canonicus Upsaliensis. Obiit anno Domini 1248 in Visby Gotlandiae, quo se contulerat propter Ruthenorum et Curonum furorem.* Jouko Vahtola chose to accept the chronicle version of Thomas's fall, and dismissed the 1245 papal bull as a product of Swedish propaganda against Thomas, suggesting that he and the see of Uppsala were in dispute, but there is not one scrap of evidence for any such dispute. See Vahtola 1984 pp. 488–516 (p. 507). Suvanto does not dispute the evidence of the papal bull, but uses the chronicle's tale of Russian fury as evidence that the 1240 Neva campaign resulted in a very severe defeat for the Swedes that weakened the Church's hold on Häme ('Navalla kärsitty tappio oli niin vakava . . .'): Suvanto 1985 pp. 8–225 (p. 47).

[93] Jaakkola 1958 pp. 198–258, Vahtola 1984 pp. 2–15. The first historian to present Finland as an independent church province in the 1220s and 30s was Gabriel Rein, in 1839. His article 'Biskop Thomas och Finland i hans tid' is reprinted in Mikander 1968 pp. 11–59. Thomas has since passed into many histories as a prelate responsible to no-one but the pope: for instance, see Urban 1976 p. 133. As evidence of his 'German period' in the see of Åbo, Vahtola also claimed that 'Vilhelm' was a German name, but Thomas's transfer of land to him suggests that he may well have been a relative, and Vahtola accepts the *Catalogus episcoporum* claim that Thomas was English! On the history of Thomas as a champion of Finland, see Lind 1992a pp. 304–07. As noted by Lind, many scholars have criticised Jaakkola's history, including Gallén 1946 pp. 55–70, Carlgren 1950 pp. 247–83 and Anthoni 1968 pp. 155–72, but Thomas's exaggerated reputation lives on.

strong German influence in Finland. The other main plank of Vahtola's argument is that the Swedes were crippled by the defeat at Leal, and were incapable of action for two decades afterwards. The Leal defeat may have dealt a heavy blow to the *Folkungaätten* by removing two of its leading figures, and it may have dealt a crippling blow to any ambitions Swedish kings had in Estonia, since the Sword Brothers and the Danes seized all the available land there within a few years of the defeat; but it did not cripple Sweden. Heinrich of Livonia tells us that the main Swedish army had gone home, having made a circuit of Rotalia and baptised many of the natives there, leaving Karl Döve and Bishop Karl in the fort at Leal. This was then destroyed by a 'huge force' from Saaremaa.[94] Since all sources indicate that the forces employed by Christian kingdoms in the Baltic during this era were small and it was actually a garrison that was destroyed, Swedish losses will have been in the low hundreds at the highest. The defeat at Leal was the first of a pattern of defeats suffered by the Swedes, which included those at Landskrona in 1300 and Orekhovets in 1348, when they overextended their resources. An army was raised, territory taken and a fort built or captured, but the army then went home after the campaigning season and left a smaller garrison force to be overwhelmed by enemies that could mobilise greater numbers from relatively close by. None of these defeats seriously weakened Sweden, but they did demonstrate the difficulty of carrying out military operations with long lines of communication and without the ability to maintain large armies in the theatre of war all year round.[95]

Before the appeal for assistance from the Sword Brothers, a series of letters concerning the Finnish bishopric were sent by Gregory IX in 1229. Two were sent to the Archbishop of Linköping, the abbot of Gotland's Cistercian monastery and the deans of Visby, informing them that the bishop, clergy and people of Finland were being taken under the Pope's protection and that the bishop's seat was being moved.[96] Three more were requests to prevent merchants from

[94] HCL 24:3, p. 214.

[95] 'Large' is a relative term—as noted elsewhere, with the exception of 'multinational' forces such as those raised for the crusades in the Holy Land, European armies of the High Middle Ages were small by comparison with those of the modern era.

[96] DS 245 (ST 74, FMU 73, REA 2), DS 246 (FMU 72, REA 1).

trading with the Novgorodians on account of their attacks on the Finnish Catholic community, one to the aforementioned, one to the Bishop of Riga, the cathedral deans of Riga, and the Cistercian abbot of Dünamünde, and one to the Bishop of Lübeck, the abbot of the monastery of St John and the deacons of (Lübeck's) largest churches.[97] Another, sent to the Bishop of Finland himself, gave permission to re-use pagan sites of worship as the sites of churches, a tried and tested conversion strategy.[98] It is possible that the Finnish bishopric was in crisis in the late 1220s, but there is no clear indication of this. We do not possess any letters Thomas may have written, nor do the chronicles of Novgorod mention any intervention in Häme or Varsinais-Suomi. From 1229 to 1231 Novgorod was in the grip of a terrible famine. The pope's appeal for an embargo had limited effect, as the trade was too valuable to Baltic merchants—rather than Novgorod being brought to its knees, it received flour and corn from them.[99]

Although there is no evidence that the diocese of Åbo was not under the authority of Uppsala in the early 1230s, an attempt was made to co-ordinate mission efforts in the eastern Baltic by the papal legate (or vice-legate), Baldwin of Alna, which may, depending on the historian's viewpoint, have amounted to an attempt at direct papal government. In 1230 the papal legate with most experience in the minefield of disputes between Danes, Sword Brothers, Bishop Albrecht and various other parties with occasional interests in Livonia was William of Modena. But in 1230 he had to delegate the task of deciding the contested election of a successor to the deceased Bishop Albrecht of Riga to another legate, Otto, who, on the advice of the abbot of Alna, chose a Cistercian monk, Baldwin, to go to Livonia. Pope Gregory IX had other preoccupations in this period, having been engaged in a struggle with Emperor Friedrich II since 1229, and it is not clear how much influence he had over Baldwin's actions. Baldwin acted in a high-handed manner and antagonised both the citizens of Riga and the Sword Brothers, particularly by

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[97] ST 75 (FMU 75, REA 4), DS 250 (FMU 74, REA 3), REA 5 (FMU 76). Another letter, DS 253 (ST 76, FMU 78, REA 7), instructed the Bishop of Linköping, the Cistercian abbot and the deans of Visby to prevent Gotlanders from trading with pagans.

[98] DS 251 (FMU 77, REA 6).

[99] Chron. Nov. p. 77.

taking personal control of Semgallia in his capacity as acting bishop of Riga.[100]

Faced by opposition from all quarters, in January 1232 Baldwin persuaded Gregory IX to invest him with even more authority, as legate throughout the eastern Baltic, Bishop of Semgallia and Kurland and administrator of various regions currently held by the Sword Brothers.[101] They sought help from the Emperor and his allies, but were in danger of losing all they owned. In the end, disobeying their Master Folkwin, they launched an all-out war against Baldwin and drove him and his forces out of most of Estonia and Livonia. In 1234, before Baldwin could recover, he was removed from office, and William of Modena returned to Livonia to re-allocate the lands. Gregory IX's 1232 appeal to the Sword Brothers to intervene in Finland was made at a point when he probably believed that the crusading effort was being co-ordinated as never before. Like Albrecht and other bishops, Gregory saw the Sword Brothers as agents of the mission effort and little more. It seems that he had little understanding of their need for income from the lands they took. Was the appeal to crusade in Finland also an attempt to deflect them from causing problems for Baldwin on the south side of the Gulf of Finland? Baldwin had blackened their name, so much so that Gregory had refused to meet with them earlier in the same year. At this time, however, the Order was more worried about the threat from the pope's own legate to the lands they had already won in Livonia and Semgallia than it was about Finnish pagans.

What relations Bishop Thomas had with Baldwin are a mystery, but it should be remembered that other bishops in the Baltic region, such as Nicholas, who succeeded as bishop of Riga in July 1231, felt as threatened by Baldwin's authority as the Sword Brothers. Baldwin had few supporters in the Baltic region, apart from Cistercian communities that arrived soon after him, and was forced to raise his own 'crusading' army from various parts of Europe in 1232–33. As regards Thomas's possible attitude to 'German' intervention in Finland, would he not also have been concerned that the Sword Brothers had a habit of seizing the land they conquered for themselves? Besides

[100] See LECUB 103, Baldwin's open letter.

[101] DS 262 (DD 1 R 6 B 127, FMU 1113), FMU 1114 (DD 1 R 6 B 131), letters to the legate and bishop of Semgallia.

any contacts with Popes Honorius and Gregory, Thomas may have discussed the possibility of assistance in Finland with Baldwin, perhaps even with the Sword Brothers, but he may equally well have been in contact with Archbishop Jarler, Erik Eriksson, Knut Långe or Ulf Jarl—we simply do not know.

12.4. *Swedish campaigns in Finland and Karelia*

The 'second crusade' of Birger Magnusson is almost as contentious as Erik Jedvardsson's 'first crusade'. Only one source mentions the campaign, the rhyme chronicle *Erikskrönikan*. Dominican annals make no reference to it, despite the Order's strong interest in Finland. *Erikskrönikan* does not call Birger's expedition a crusade, but does emphasise the holy nature of the task. As usual in this work, no date is given. As noted in Chapter 2, 1249–50 was the accepted date for many years, based on an interpretation of *Erikskrönikan*, but its account of Birger Jarl's activities at the time of King Erik's death and his son's selection for the kingship does not fit with that of *Hákonar saga*, unquestionably a more reliable source.[102] Jarl Gallén's dating of the crusade to 1238–39 makes more sense, in that it would be a clear response to the preaching of a crusade that presumably occurred after an appeal by Pope Gregory to the Archbishop of Uppsala and all his bishops to do this in 1237.[103] There was also another incentive

[102] See Chapter 3:11.

[103] DS 298 (ST 86, FMU 82). According to Jokipii, Gallén's arguments are based on 'all sorts of constructions' (p. 259). In fact, all arguments for any dating of the crusade are based on constructions, as there are no dates in *Erikskrönikan* and many of its events are not in chronological order. There is a whole series of fallacious arguments in Jokipii's article; namely, that Birger was Mats Kettilmundson's direct ancestor (p. 250, itself uncertain: see Chapter 3:11, note 117) and that information passed down through three generations would be more reliable than information received by King Håkon from messengers (here a phrase from *Hákonar saga* is taken completely out of context to 'prove' the point), that Ulf Jarl would have been undermined if someone other than the jarl had led the *ledung* during his lifetime, and that it needs to be shown that someone other than the jarl could do this, which is in fact quite clear from the *landskapslagar*, and that *Erikskrönikan* says before the crusade episode that 'Birger was jarl', when in fact it says he later became jarl (*Han war födder i Biälbo/ok wart en järl för än han doo*: Ek p. 29): Jokipii 2000 pp. 232–279 (250, 258–262). Jokipii is right that there would have been difficulty in organising the overseas *ledung* for Candlemass 1238 when the 1237 bull was sent only in December (p. 234), but it is by no means certain that an overseas expedition had to be prepared by Candlemass, even if this was the preferred date (as for Tyrgils

for Sweden to act in 1238–39. As a result of the tireless efforts of William of Modena, Valdemar II and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Hermann Balke, came to an agreement in June 1238, by which Reval and some other areas of northern Estonia were to be returned to Denmark. Despite *Erikskrönikan's* confused chronology, there is no particular reason to discount its claim that Birger Magnusson led the expedition. Contrary to what many historians have assumed, the chronicle does not say that Birger was jarl at the time of the expedition. In addition, as noted earlier, the leader of an overseas *ledung* expedition did not have to be the *riksjarl*.[104] The Svealand law codes state clearly that both patrol fleet and war *ledung* could be led by a representative chosen by the king, the *förman*, and this is precisely what the author of *Erikskrönikan* calls King Erik's *maghe*, Birger.[105] We can well imagine an ambitious noble wishing to lead such a venture; equally, it is possible to envisage that Ulf Jarl, if he was indeed the guarantor of stability at home, would have wished to remain in Sweden and may have been only too pleased to see Birger expending his energy in the eastern Baltic and the Gulf of Finland.

1238–39 is not the only suggested alternative dating to 1249. Having accepted that 1249 cannot have been the date of the crusade because of Birger's negotiations with Håkon IV, Vahtola refuses to accept the other part of Gallén's argument, that it probably occurred in response to the 1237 bull, and dates it to the late 1250s. To him, it cannot have occurred in the 1230s, because this was the Åbo bishopric's 'German period'. Without the 'German period', for which there is no evidence, this dating has less to recommend it than either of the other two. Equally unconvincing is Vahtola's explanation of Birger's absence at the time of the death of King Erik (as related in *Erikskrönikan*), that he was visiting Åbo to install the new

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Knutsson's expedition, according to *Ek*) and was significant for the regular patrol fleet. He then argues that an expedition to Häme would not have been necessary in 1239 because the Mongols were threatening Novgorod and a negotiated peace could have been concluded—this is possible, but it assumes that the pagan *hämäläiset* were dependent upon Novgorod and would have sought peace without promise of their aid, and also that the Swedes would have accepted this. One might as well argue that 1239 was an ideal time for the Swedes to suppress paganism in Häme, because they could be sure that there would not be Novgorodian intervention. In any case, the level of Novgorodian interest in Häme is probably exaggerated.

[104] See Chapters 4:1 and 7:3.

[105] Ek p. 30.

bishop, Björn, since this visit is not mentioned in any source, reliable or otherwise.[106]

There remains the possibility that the 'second crusade', like the first, may not have occurred at all. Uneasy about the whole episode resting upon the evidence of a rhyme chronicle composed some seventy years later, some historians have sought to explain its absence from annals or other records. Many have come up with a simple explanation—other written records did exist, but they were destroyed in their entirety when the bishop's residence at Kuusisto was burnt by the Novgorodians in 1318. Though not impossible, this seems a little too convenient; if the 'crusade' really was a major event, it would surely have appeared in Swedish annals. However, annal entries for the pre-1250 period in Sweden are neither plentiful nor very informative. Events that were recorded involve the death of kings, leading magnates or clerics. Even *Erikskrönikan* hardly gives the impression that Birger Magnusson's expedition encountered prolonged or serious resistance such as that encountered by crusaders in Estonia, and on these counts it may not have warranted an entry.

Although she does not explicitly suggest that Birger's crusade never happened, Nordstrandh does suggest that the episode as it appears in *Erikskrönikan* may be modelled on the crusade of St Erik.[107] She is certainly right in pointing out that the 'crusade' episode fulfils some of the same functions for the Folkung dynasty as Erik's did for the *Erikska ätten*—the founder of the dynasty, in this case Birger, has done what Christian princes should do, and set out to convert the heathen. We are left in no doubt that the rhyme chronicle was cleverly constructed. The poet tells the history of the Folkung dynasty in such a way as to emphasise its legitimacy, but he does this by relating selected events in a specific order and embellishing them with his own interpretation and accounts of conversations. Wholesale invention of major events is less likely, as it would have undermined the persuasive value of his chronicle. It is possible to envisage, however, that an expedition went to Tavastia and built the fort the author mentions, thus establishing a military presence, but with hardly any fighting. The placing of garrisons and presumably some form

[106] Vahtola 1984 pp. 509–13.

[107] A more recent commentator on *Erikskrönikan*, Gisela Vilhelmsdotter, puts even greater emphasis on the crusade as a purely literary construction: Vilhelmsdotter 1999.

of governor(s) in Finland is analogous to the establishment of a bishopric in Varsinais-Suomi. In the latter case, although there is evidence that the area was already largely Christianised by 1200, the Pope wished for the area to come within the compass of the Church and to pay taxes in the same way as other Christian regions. In the former case, even if most of the people in Varsinais-Suomi and Häme already looked on Swedes as allies against Novgorod, this alliance was not secure and the Swedish crown had much to gain by taxing them. Despite the evidence of 'pagan reaction' mentioned above, it is quite possible that many western Finns were willing to be baptised in order to fight a 'traditional enemy', in the same way that the Letts were willing to be baptised and fight for the Sword Brothers against the Estonians, as emphasised by Heinrich of Livonia. Whether Karelians or Novgorod were 'traditional enemies' is another question.

Certain archaeological evidence lends weight to the occurrence of Birger's expedition in *Erikskrönikan*, although it does not prove that its events were described accurately. The fort of Hakoinen, on the southern edge of the Vanaja settlement area in Häme, appears to have been occupied by Swedes.[108] It is not possible to establish the precise date of occupation, but there is good reason to think that it might be the *taffwesta borg* mentioned in the poem. A garrison at Hakoinen had access to the Vanaja lake and water system should action be required there, but also a reasonable chance of escape to the coast if matters got out of hand. Later, the Swedes built another fort on the present site of Hämeenlinna, a little closer to the centre of the settlement region and opposite the trading site of Varikkoniemi. The Schulzes also suggested that Varikkoniemi might have been the site of the opposed landing made by Birger's troops and the *djetinets* of 'Vanai' recorded as burnt in the Novgorod Chronicle entry for 1311. The account mentions an advance along the Mustajoki, the burning of a *gorod,* and an attack on a fort (*djetinets*). Details of the fort are given, perhaps because they were exceptional by Russian standards; it was on a high hill, defended by *nemtsy*.[109] The description may be a stock literary device, in which case the attack could have occurred at either site, but the fort at Hämeenlinna was on an island, rather than a hill. The *gorod* which was burned could possibly

[108] See Appendix 2.1.3.
[109] Chron. Nov. p. 117.

be the lower section (outer bailey) of the fort at Hakoinen, its defences almost certainly being wooden.[110] The *djetjnets* (citadel) into which the *nemtsy* retreated after the *gorod* was burned could therefore refer to the upper fort, and not necessarily a whole fort.[111] Varikkoniemi would certainly qualify as a *gorod*, but the site of the fort at Hämeenlinna does not fit the description of the *djetinets*. 'Vanai' is surely 'Vanaja', but could refer to the region or Varikkoniemi. Both Drake and the Schulzes assume that Hakoinen was abandoned when Hämeenlinna was built, in c. 1285, and that the record of King Birger's donation of it to his brother in 1308 refers to the latter. Finds from Hakoinen contradict this, while at Hämeenlinna there are no dateable finds earlier than coins belonging to the reign of Magnus Eriksson (1319–63). Drake's original assumption that the granite fort at Hämeenlinna was built in c. 1285, the date of the construction of stone fortifications at Visby, was based on comparisons of architectural style.

A problem related to that of the 'second crusade' and Sweden's possible expansion strategy in the mid-thirteenth century is the nature of a Swedish incursion into Novgorodian territory described in various Russian chronicles. The battle on the Neva in 1240 has assumed the stature of a huge triumph in Russia. The architect of this victory, Alexander Jaroslavich, Prince of Novgorod, ultimately acquired the name 'Nevsky', but this is probably not a contemporary epithet. Lind has shown that the version of the tale as it usually appears in modern Russian historiography originates in the late thirteenth-century *Life of Alexander Nevsky*. This subsequently found its way into the *Laurentian Chronicle*, the four chronicles of Novgorod, the *First Sophia Chronicle* and later works, some of which contain additional elements.[112]

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[110] For opposing views on the location of 'Vanai', see Taavitsainen 1994 pp. 164–69, and Jutikkala 2000 pp. 280–287 (p. 286). Jutikkala thinks the Russian word ГОРОДЪ (*gorod*), translated by him as *kaupunki* (Eng. *town*), could not have referred to the outer bailey of Hakoinen—this may be the case now, but whether usage was this exact in the early fourteenth century is uncertain. The outer bailey would probably have contained several buildings, and would therefore have been as large as most Finnish villages. If the chronicle account of attack on the fort of Vanai is taken as accurate and as referring to Varikkoniemi, the defenders would have had to retreat across the lake into Hämeenlinna, but this is not on a hill.

[111] See Gardberg and Weilin 1993 pp. 23–24.

[112] The *First Novgorod Chronicle*, the *Younger Version* of this chronicle, the *Novogorod Karamzin Chronicle*, and the *Fourth Novgorod Chronicle*. There is not space to examine all the different versions of the Neva battle and their interrelationship in this work,

According to this version an army of Swedes, *murmane* (Norwegians), *sum* and *jem* descended on the Neva with the intention of conquering Alexander's land. The army included a *kniaz* and bishops and was led by a *voevoda* (commander) named Spiridon. Alexander defeated it with a small force of Novgorodians and some men from Ladoga. On the enemy side, Spiridon and a bishop died, corpses of high-ranking Swedes were sunk in three boats and others were buried in pits. Of the dead, many were found on the river bank where no Russians had fought, believed to be victims of God's angels. Twenty Novgorodians were killed (four being named) and an unspecified number of Ladoga townsfolk. There are obviously numerous problems with this account, which conflicts with others that must also have used Novgorodian sources contemporary with the battle, such as the fourteenth-century chronicles of Pskov.[113] The 'enormous number of boats' in which the Swedes and their allies arrive is a stock hagiographical phrase. Spiridon is not a Swedish name, and was in fact the name of the archbishop of Novgorod in 1240, so this certainly derives from an error in a later text. No Swedish bishop is recorded elsewhere as having died in 1240.[114] The discovery of innumerable enemy corpses killed by angels derives from the Old Testament ('Book of Kings') tale of the destruction of Sennacherib's army, also inserted in the *Life*, whose author decided to use it for the Neva battle as well.[115] As Lind noted, the improbable presence of Norwegians is likely to have been an addition to the tale made in the period when Sweden and Norway had the same king, after 1320. There is no doubt that there was a threat to the Neva in the fourteenth century, and it may have been this that inspired the incorporation of the *Life* into early Novgorodian chronicles.

By contrast to the Russian tradition, the Neva battle is considered an insignificant event in Sweden, and is not mentioned at all in many histories. Nor is it mentioned in any extant medieval Swedish source. This need not simply be a case of covering up defeat, as

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nor am I qualified to do so. The question is dealt with more fully by Lind 1991 pp. 271–78.

[113] Lind 1991 p. 274.

[114] It may be noted in passing that no source makes any mention of Bishop Thomas in connection with this expedition, yet he has become its leader in the eyes of some Finnish historians, an extension of the 'independent Finnish church principality' syndrome. See, for instance, Vahtola 1984 p. 506.

[115] II Kings 19.

other defeats were recorded, such as those of Leal, Landskrona and Orekhov. If it is assumed that some form of clash between Swedes and Novgorodians occurred in 1240, which seems probable, it was possibly not important enough to record, and was omitted from annals for the same reasons that the 'second crusade' was not recorded. The claims of Russian chronicles that the Neva landing was an attempt to conquer Novgorod can be dismissed, but whether it was an attempt to establish a permanent base or simply a raid is harder to say. One possible parallel to the Neva encounter is provided by the clash between Norwegians and Scots at Largs in 1263, in which a Norwegian force that made one of many forays all down the western seaboard of Scotland apparently had the worst of a clash with Scottish forces, but was not destroyed and later withdrew in good order to its ships. In later Scottish historiography this event too assumed a stature out of all proportion to its significance.

The Russian *Testament of the Swedish King Magnus* is the only Russian source that gives the leader of the Swedish force a Swedish name, 'Kniaz Berger', presumably Birger Magnusson. As noted by Lind, this apocryphal fourteenth-century text, in which King Magnus Eriksson admonishes his people not to attack Novgorod again, contains details of Magnus's campaigns that appear to be correct, and may retain a genuine chronicle tradition from the mid-thirteenth century.[116] The title of *kniaz* for Birger is not inappropriate, as he was a powerful landowner and *dux* before his elevation to *riksjarl* in 1248. Furthermore, if he was indeed active in Finland in 1238–39, as seems likely, a raid on the Neva may be seen as an extension of his activities there. There is no mention of the 1240 campaign in *Erikskrönikan*, despite its interest in Birger Jarl's dynasty, but the early section of this is a preamble to its main events of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and such an unsuccessful foray would not provide the same credentials for the dynasty to rule as the campaign to convert the heathen. If the wording of the oldest version of the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* in the *Laurentian Chronicle*, which suggests that the Swedes were about to build a fort when Alexander arrived at the Neva, is correct, there may have been a plan to leave

[116] Lind 1991 p. 279. The *Testament* was supposedly written by King Magnus in a Russian monastery, where he allegedly died. In fact Magnus drowned off Norway in 1274, ten years after having been removed from the Swedish kingship.

a garrison.[117] The procedure of building a fortified camp at a river outlet with a view to consolidation in future years was followed on several later occasions, in 1293 (at Viborg), and 1300 (Landskrona). However, the 'battle' was probably a small affair. The Swedes were able to take their own dead away on their ships, so the result was clearly not a rout. Obviously they could not build a fortified camp with enemy forces close by. The exaggeration of this Novgorodian success is closely paralleled by a similar exaggeration of Alexander's victory over the Teutonic Order at Lake Peipus, the famous 'battle on the ice' two years later, although this had to await Russo-German conflicts of the twentieth century and an epic film to surpass the Neva victory in significance.[118]

For some historians the presence of *sum* and *jem* among the enemy on the Neva has presented a problem. Since we may rule out the presence of *murmane*, their presence is also doubtful, but not as improbable. If Gallén's dating of the 'second crusade' to Häme is not accepted, that part of Finland would have been outside Swedish control and the presence of *jem* in 1240 would be unlikely, but not impossible, given that Häme itself is unlikely to have been a single polity. In the First Novgorod Chronicle *sum* and *jem* are also listed among the participants in an expedition of 1256, alongside the Swedes and 'Didman and his land' (Dietrich von Kyvel and his men, probably his vassals and soldiers of the Teutonic Order).[119] Since this entry was presumably also included in an earlier redaction of the *First Novgorod Chronicle* than the extant one, it is even possible that it provided the inspiration for the author of the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* to include *sum* and *jem* in the enemy army on the Neva. The 1256 expedition went to Estonia, where a fort was begun at the mouth

[117] Lind 1991 p. 294, note 84.

[118] Since it occurred shortly after the Teutonic Order's absorption of the Sword Brothers, and the Grand Master of the Order had returned to Prussia in 1238, the leaders and most of the knights in the 1241–42 invasion of Novgorod territory were probably Sword Brothers. Given that fifty had died at Saule and some remained in garrisons, the number of knights at the battle cannot have been large. See Fennell 1983 pp. 105–06.

[119] Dietrich von Kyvel. After the demise of the Sword Brothers in 1237, Hermann Balke, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, made a visit to Livonia, and sixty knights were sent to reinforce the remaining Sword Brothers, but the Master had limited control over those already established in Estonia. Dietrich was probably the most powerful vassal, who also founded a castle at Kaprio in 1241, which was destroyed by the Novgorodians, and at Wesenberg (Rakvere) in 1252, which survived.

of the Narova. The Teutonic Order was the beneficiary of the campaign, as the site of Narva remained in its hands. The usual (and probably correct) interpretation of Swedish participation in this campaign is that Birger Jarl did not want Sweden to be excluded from any conquests made around the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland, but local initiative by Swedes and Finns on the opposite side of the Gulf cannot be ruled out. Shortly before, Pope Alexander IV had named Votia, Ingria and Karelia as a mission region to be placed under a new bishop.[120]

Despite later claims by Russian historians that there was a pan-Catholic plot to destroy Novgorod in the aftermath of the Mongol assault, the 1256 chronicle entry is the only record of joint action by Swedes and Sword Brothers or Teutonic Knights. In other cases the actions of Swedes and the Military Orders, whether recorded in western or Russian sources, are notable for their lack of co-ordination. These powers were rivals, and were 'co-operating' only in the sense that they were attacking the same 'legitimate' enemy rather than each other. The legitimacy of their attacks on Novgorodian interests derived from papal injunctions against schismatics and William of Modena's encouragement to join in a common enterprise against an enemy that did not recognise the authority of the Bishop of Rome. Successive popes no doubt hoped for better co-operation, but this was not to be. In addition, despite periodic conflict, the enmity between 'western' and 'eastern' powers that developed in the mid-thirteenth century should not be exaggerated. For most of the time trading relations continued, and the foreign quarter in Novgorod was maintained.

Thomas's successor as Bishop of Åbo was Björn (or Bero), Erik Eriksson's chaplain and 'kansler', according to the *Catalogus Episcoporum*. He began his work between 5 June 1248 and 27 August 1249, and was presumably an ally of Birger Jarl as well as the king. Between Thomas's enforced resignation in 1245 and Björn's appointment there was probably no bishop. It has often been assumed that the diocese of Finland was looked after by the Dominican friars in the interim period between the resignation of Thomas and the arrival of Björn. This is quite possible, as they were certainly active in Estonia, but no Finnish convent is known of this early. Their convent in Tallinn

[120] FMU 108, 3 August 1255.

was not finally established until 1248, and they were in Finland by the following year.[121] Their convents were always situated in urban centres, but where the first one in Finland was founded is unclear—it may have been at Nousiainen, or in Åbo, where it is first recorded in 1309. Both Dominican and Cistercian friars were probably active in Finland long before this. The Dominicans were certainly suited to the task of preaching and looking after newly converted souls, having been given this right in 1216 (one of their main tasks was in fact to combat heresy). They were probably involved in missionary work in Ingria and Savo-Karelia in 1255–56, and in Karelia in the 1290s. From 1258 to 1266 the Finnish bishopric was in the hands of Bishop Ragvald, and during his period, and for 30 years afterwards, there was no serious conflict with Novgorod.

12.5. *Sweden and Novgorod*

By the end of the thirteenth century, Sweden and Novgorod were battling for control of Karelia. Many historians have emphasised that Sweden's real interest in eastward expansion was to control the Neva river link from Ladoga to the Gulf of Finland and the Vuoksa, which linked Saimaa to Ladoga. Scandinavian interest in these routes went back to the Viking Period. The Vikings had played a major part in the foundation of Novgorod itself, but during the late tenth and eleventh centuries the rise of Russian principalities prevented further Viking adventures south of Ladoga, although many *varjager* continued to serve as mercenaries, at least before 1050. Nevertheless, according to the Novgorod chronicles, the trade route to Ladoga continued to be the target of Scandinavian attacks, though nothing suggests that these were more than raids.[122] Whether any of these were sponsored by the king of Sweden is uncertain. It is also possible that an alignment of *hämäläiset* with Sweden and Karelians with Novgorod occurred before 1240. In 1142 both Swedes and *jem* raided, although there is no indication of co-ordination. Raids by *jem* alone are recorded

[121] Salminen 2003 pp. 37–56 (pp. 38/48).

[122] In 1142 a bishop and a Swedish *kniaz* ('king' or 'prince') raided with 60 ships, an attack on Ladoga by *svei* is recorded for 1164, and a raid by a fleet of *varjager* (Vikings/Varangians) took place in 1201. See Chron. Nov. pp. 41–43.

in 1149 and 1228.[123] Nor is it certain that there was any Novgorodian instigation behind the twelfth-century raids of Karelians into Häme. Despite the emphasis placed on Russian attacks on Sweden's eastern border, particularly in Finnish historiography of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is no question that it was Novgorod's strategic interests that were threatened from the late thirteenth to the sixteenth century, firstly by Swedish attempts to seize the Karelian isthmus, and secondly by spontaneous colonisation from western and central Finland. Less certain is the extent to which Novgorod may have intervened in Häme, or even further west, before this.

Several Slavic loanwords associated with the new religion entered the Finnish language in the early Middle Ages, such as *Raamattu* (Bible), *pappi* (priest), *pakana* (pagan) and *risti* (cross), but it is impossible to know whether these arrived with traders, like many Christian artefacts, or as a result of missions from Russia. The sole written reference that might refer to the eleventh century in Finland is an entry for 1042 in the Russian *Primary Chronicle*, which tells us that Prince Jaroslav Vladimirovich ('the Wise') extracted tribute from the *jem*, although their identification with *häme* is uncertain.[124] The same chronicle also claims that he conquered the Iatvigans and 'founded' Tartto (Juriev) in Estonia. Jaroslav was in a powerful position, as undisputed ruler of Rus after 1136, but it is probable that 'conquest' here means the imposition of tribute. The maintenance of tribute depended on the ability to punish those who failed to pay, which was difficult during the frequent periods of internecine strife in Rus. There are several Russian sources for intervention in Estonia, and it does appear that there was a 'Russian period' in Tartto, presumably the installation of a garrison, but there is no such evidence from eleventh-century Häme or Karelia.[125] If there were tribute payments, they were probably intermittent; even the Russian occupation of Tartto apparently ended in destruction c. 1060, probably in the

[123] Chron. Nov. pp. 17–20. The 1149 *jem* raid was made on the Votes, another Finnic-speaking group that inhabited the region north-east of Lake Peipus. Although their material culture was distinguishable up to the sixteenth century, both these and the Ingrians to their east (Rus. *vod* and *izora*) were tributary to Rus-Novgorod for virtually the entire period after 900: see Uino 1991 pp. 11–34, and Kirkinen 1991 pp. 35–66.

[124] Nestorskrönikan p. 127.

[125] On Tartto, see Selirand 1989 p. 60. On the general theme of Russian intervention in Estonia in this period, see also Vahtre 1992 pp. 622–30.

Estonian 'revolt' of 1061. There were also several Novgorodian interventions in support of Estonian rebels during the 1220s, a reflection of long-term Russian influence in the region.

Much later, in his bull calling for a crusade to Tavastland in 1237, Gregory IX mentioned that the *tavaster* were being encouraged to apostatise by 'enemies of the cross'. Possibly a communication from the north had given this information to Gregory, but there is no certainty that his source was reliable, or that the enemies of the cross were Novgorodians. After the defeat of the Sword Brothers at Saule there was rebellion in Kurland, and some of the rebels had resumed their piratical activities in the Baltic. This too may have encouraged the *tavaster* to refuse to pay taxes to the Church and reject its religion, but the idea of a pan-pagan campaign against the Church is improbable given the political realities of the time. It is unlikely that the inhabitants of either Häme or Kurland were concerned with what the others were doing, even if they were aware of it. On the other hand, even if the rebels did not actively incite others to follow their example, they may have been suspected of doing so. Later still, writing of Birger Magnusson's expedition to Häme, the author of *Erikskrönikan* made the statement 'Thet samma land vart alt cristith—jak tror at rytzakonungen mistit' ('That same land was wholly Christianised—I believe that the Russian king lost it'), implying that Häme had been in some way subject to Russians, but he could be assuming a situation similar to that of his own time, when Swedes were attempting to wrest Karelia from Novgorodian control.[126]

Regrettably, it is not only the claims of rhyme chroniclers that cannot be taken at face value. There is also a problem in the interpretation of papal letters. The papal chancellery used a variety of terms to describe threats to Finland, and it is impossible to be sure that 'ethnicities', such as *kareli* or *rutheni*, always referred to what we would think of as 'Karelians' or 'Russians'. The papal chancellery, situated as it was in Italy or southern France, is unlikely to have had a clear idea of what these names represented, or exactly where these 'peoples' lived. In addition, as emphasised by Jukka Korpela, a number of stereotypical formulae were used in these letters, which were chosen as appropriate to the subject and recipient of the letter,

[126] Ek p. 32. Note the similarity to the claim that it was Karelians who burnt Sigtuna in 1187.

which was frequently an appeal to action.[127] The term *rutheni*, for instance, had previously been used to refer to Slavs in general. If papal letters were written in response to a request from someone nearer to the problem, there is a possibility that the terminology is more accurate (in so far as the sender's was), but in many cases it is only the papal letter that is extant. Even when papal letters do appear to be a response to information received, such as those of 1229 appealing for a trade embargo on the *rutheni*, we cannot be sure that the situation had been understood correctly by the Pope or his advisors. The usefulness of such letters as evidence of Rus, later Novgorodian, intervention in central and western Finland, is not as great as it appears, or, as Korpela pointed out, as many Finnish historians influenced by more modern events would have liked it to be. Already in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries chroniclers such as the author of *Erikskrönikan* and Ericus Olai were seeing the thirteenth century in terms of the battle between Swedes and Novgorodians, Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church.

It is by no means certain that Novgorod exerted strong control of Karelia in the mid-thirteenth century, let alone Häme. According to the *Laurentian Chronicle* Jaroslav Vsevelodovich converted the Karelians to Orthodoxy in 1227. This supposed event is not mentioned in the chronicles of Novgorod, and Lind has observed that it has the style of a praise text and was probably intended to present a retrospective picture of the historical link between Karelia and Russia and conversion to Orthodoxy.[128] More likely to be reliable is the *First Novgorod Chronicle*, which relates that Prince Dimitri Alexandrovich conquered Karelia in 1278.[129] An attempt to break away from Novgorod's orbit in 1269 is also mentioned.[130] As early as the tenth century some form of taxation may have been levied north of Ladoga, when there were Rus trading places between the lake and the White Sea. The letter of appointment for Sviatoslav Olgovich (1137) lists such places as collection points for taxes paid to the archbishop.[131]

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[127] Korpela 1997 pp. 161–72 (pp. 162–68). See also Korpela 2000 pp. 30–41.
[128] Lind 1994 p. 45.
[129] Chron. Nov. p. 107.
[130] Chron. Nov. p. 104.
[131] Kirkinen 1963 pp. 64–66.

Various scholars have suggested that there were 'boundaries' between Sweden and Novgorod before 1323; perhaps running through Häme, or, after Häme was brought under control, Kymijoki.[132] However, there is no record of any agreement, and no reason why Savo and Karelia west of Ladoga should not have been a 'no-man's land' in the mid-late thirteenth century, as far as Sweden and Novgorod were concerned. There may have been local agreements as to fishing and land use rights involving native chieftains, Swedes or Novgorodians, but medieval frontier zones were not necessarily fixed, especially in thinly populated and marginal subsistence regions. How clear a divide there was between the *tavaster* and Karelians is uncertain, but neither represented a single polity. As noted, finds in eastern Häme were close to Karelian styles, and Karelians probably dominated Savo before c. 1250. Apart from the evidence of brooches, other archaeological evidence has been found, such as Karelian-type coins at Kapatuosia hillfort. Suvanto therefore proposed that Karelians could have been settled in this region by Novgorod, and hillforts may have been occupied by them.[133] In view of the lack of evidence for Novgorodian dominance of Karelia before the late thirteenth century this seems improbable. Change in material culture does not necessarily imply deliberate transplantation of people, and could come about through trade or intermarriage. There is also the possibility that eastern Häme was settled by Karelians fleeing Novgorod's taxation. A comparison might be drawn with the Estonian region west of Lake Peipus, often dominated by Novgorod, where archaeology indicates an influx of Votes, but whether they were fleeing taxation or deliberately settled is again uncertain.[134]

As in Häme, archaeological finds from Karelia do not give a picture of a consistent culture throughout the region. Finnish archaeologists have often identified the Viking Period as the era when a distinctively 'Karelian' culture appeared, but few Crusade Period customs were restricted to the shores of Ladoga and even within this settlement area there were significant differences. Whereas some burial customs are similar to those further west, others are not, notably a small number of graves near Käkisalmi that bear strong similarities

[132] See Kerkkonen 1962 pp. 243–68, and Suvanto 1986 pp. 49–65.
[133] Suvanto 1962 pp. 49–65.
[134] Uino 1991 pp. 26–27.

to the Orthodox 'houses of the dead' (*grobnitsat*), found in northern Russian regions among both Slavic- and Finnic-speaking peoples.[135] It has been suggested, given the small size of the cemeteries and the richness of the contents, that those buried in them represented a social elite with strong links to Novgorod and its fur trade, particularly as they appear in the same century when Karelians are first mentioned in the Chronicles of Novgorod.[136] In all there are fewer than twenty excavated Crusade Period cemeteries, in which there were approximately fifty furnished graves, many excavated in the late nineteenth century, although other objects that probably date from this period have been found in places where there may once have been cemeteries.

Links between Karelia and Novgorod were long-standing, as witnessed by the number of Karelian artefacts unearthed in the city itself. Several of the famous birchbark texts also mention Karelian place-names, although the majority belong to the later Middle Ages. It is important to stress, however, that early trading contacts and even payment of taxes to Novgorod's archbishop do not necessarily imply Christianisation. Undoubtedly missionary work was undertaken, but how much effort was made at conversion is a matter for conjecture. There were no mendicant friars in Rus. Orthodox monasteries certainly provided many services for the people around them, but in the thirteenth century there were few throughout the whole of Rus. The first monastic foundation in the Ladoga region was Valamo. Although Kirkinen thought it may have been founded as early as the twelfth century, it seems much more probable that it was a fourteenth-century foundation.[137]

The growth of the town of Novgorod began in the tenth century, when the area around the site was still inhabited by Finnic-speaking people (*chud*). In the eleventh century it became the trading centre for north-western Rus, as the importance of western trade increased and the flow of eastern silver declined. As a result Staraya Ladoga, formerly the gateway to the Russian river system for Viking trade, came within its orbit. Staraya Ladoga was a Scandinavian foundation on the south shore of Ladoga,[138] where there was a very sparse

[135] Kolpakov and Ryabzeva 1994 pp. 77–86.
[136] Saksa, Uinio and Hiekkanen 2003, p. 388.
[137] Kirkinen 1963 pp. 107–39, Lind 1979 pp. 234–61.
[138] Franklin and Shepard 1996 pp. 14–21.

Finnic population. By the early twelfth century a *posadnik* (governor) was installed there, and a stone fort was constructed in 1114–16. The foundation of Novgorod's prosperity was trade, and furs constituted the most common tribute and its most important export. By the thirteenth century rural areas extending to Ladoga in the north, Lake Peipus in the west and as far as Torzhok in the east were theoretically governed as extensions of the city districts (*sotnyas*), including satellite towns such as Pskov and Staraya Ladoga. With the exception of these towns, the whole vast tribute-empire was very thinly populated by scattered tribes. Novgorod became increasingly dominated by its nobility, who were probably able to dominate the popular assembly (*veche*) and controlled the administrative areas (*kontsy*) by the end of the twelfth century. Princes were regularly expelled from the city, taking their personal military following, the *druzhina*, with them.[139] On at least one occasion the people of Novgorod summoned Votes, Ingrians and Karelians to help them against the prince (1270).[140] Hence only a perceived threat to Novgorod or its route to the Baltic enabled the raising of a large army. Novgorod nevertheless responded well to threats to its immediate hinterland. For most of the period 1200–1323 it was on the defensive, as tribes on its western borders were replaced by aggressive states or military orders. It was still dependent on a prince and his retinue when an army was required to defend it, and Alexander Jaroslavich was indeed recalled for this purpose in 1242 (having been expelled in 1240).[141] But its capacity to campaign further afield was limited. As princes elsewhere vied to become prince or place their candidate in Novgorod the city became faction-ridden. However, in the late thirteenth century a new administrative district was created, the *pyatina*, whose governors were less vulnerable to the faction disputes in the city.[142]

The extent of possible parish organisation in Karelia is difficult to assess. At the Peace of Nöteborg (1323) Savilahti, Äyräpää and Jääski were ceded to Sweden by Novgorod. Each was listed as a *pogosta* in the treaty, but they were probably recently settled areas and it is

[139] Novgorod is relatively well documented, but other cities in Kievan Rus were comparable in many ways: see Franklin and Shepard 1996 pp. 278–91, Froianov and Dvornichenko 1994 pp. 30–37.

[140] Chron. Nov. p. 104.

[141] Chron. Nov. p. 86.

[142] Birnbaum 1981 pp. 68–72. See also Franklin and Shepard 1996 pp. 278–91.

not certain that there was any real ecclesiastical organisation at the time. By the mid-fourteenth century each was a parish of the Latin Church.[143] At the end of the fourteenth century there were six parishes in Orthodox Karelia.[144] The early tithe (*desiatina*) in Rus was paid as a proportion of the prince's tribute, but this was supplemented by a judicial tithe (supposedly extinguished in the mid-twelfth century) and a trade tithe. It is unlikely that judicial tithes were collected in Karelia outside the towns. In many cases early Russian taxes were based on previously existing tributes collected by local chieftains.[145] Salo suggested that the origin of the *kihlakunta* (Est. *kihelkond*), which existed in Karelia, Häme and Estonia was to be found in a district division for tribute payment to Rus-Novgorod, each giving hostages as surety for payment, a common practice in early medieval Europe. According to this theory, each *kihlakunta* of Karelia became a Russian *pogosta*, thus accounting for the translation in the Swedish version of the treaty of Nöteborg, *gislalagh*. The theory implies at least intermittent payment of tribute by the people of all three regions during the twelfth century at the latest, but the only good written and archaeological evidence of Russian military activity concerns Estonia.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Dmitri's invasion occurred during a period when Karelian culture was assimilating to that of Novgorod. Despite the limited quantity of grave goods discovered, they have given a string of datings throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries and into the thirteenth.[146] Artefacts of western Baltic (mainly Gotland) origin have been found, and a scattering of eastern Christian objects. Cremation burials, the most common form of burial in the Viking Period, disappeared gradually during the Crusade Period. By the fourteenth century furnished graves too have almost disappeared, but even in the fifteenth century some dead were still buried with possessions. Conversely, the dead in some Crusade Period graves have no possessions. A marked shift in the orientation of graves is also observable around the turn of the fourteenth century, so that the head of the deceased is in the west or south-west, as opposed to the former north-west/north east quadrant. Despite the

[143] REA 52, 83 and 98.
[144] Kuujo 1955 p. 169.
[145] Schapov 1993 pp. 87–99.
[146] Over 200 graves from this period have been excavated in the Karelian isthmus and around Ladoga, but most have not contained goods: Uino 1991 p. 260.

difficulty in interpreting limited archaeological evidence, there is no indication that there was a violent or sudden enforced conversion to Christianity, since old cemeteries remained in use, and most contained both furnished and unfurnished graves as well as cremation and inhumation burials. The limited and slow development of Christian institutions and customs in Karelia also makes it highly improbable that there was any serious Novgorodian effort at conversion or control of regions further west, such as Häme.

Although Varsinais-Suomi and Häme were on the periphery of the trade route from the Baltic and along the Gulf of Finland to the interior of Russia, there seems not to have been any great impetus for Sweden to exert direct control over them until the thirteenth century. The Pope's appeal for an expedition to suppress apostasy in Häme coincided with an increased Swedish interest in seizing control of the route to Ladoga. If the 1240 expedition to the Neva did represent an attempt to build a fort there, possibly as a precursor to a more substantial structure, a Häme expedition in 1238–39 may be seen as a stepping stone to a more important target, the Neva river route.[147] The establishment of a permanent Swedish presence on the north shore of the Gulf of Finland ensured that the Danes would not control both shores. However, even the 1240 attack may have occurred purely on the initiative of Birger Magnusson, if he was indeed its leader.

The danger to Novgorod's trade route increased towards the end of the thirteenth century. After a brief period of relative peace two attacks were made on Ladoga in 1280 and 1283, the perpetrators named as *nemtsy*, in this case almost certainly people from Finland, whether Swedes or natives.[148] The Novgorodians had first adopted this pejorative term ('mutes') for Swedes in 1188, thus lumping them together with others of the Latin Church. It was indicative of the deteriorating relationship between adherents of western and eastern churches in the north. In 1292 Novgorodian forces raided Häme, and in the following year the Swedes launched the so-called 'third crusade' into Karelia and founded the fortress of Viborg. The extent to which this effort may have been inspired by religious motives is

[147] Even if the 'crusade' occurred in 1249, it may still be seen in this light.

[148] Kirkinen 1963 pp. 92–93. On the history and use of the term *nemtsy*, see Lind 2001b pp. 137–42.

difficult to assess, but it is interesting that *Erikskrönikan* calls neither this nor the earlier expedition to Tavastland a crusade. It emphasises that both were directed at pagans (*hedno*), but these are often distinguished from Russians (*rytza*).[149] It appears that the author regarded Karelia, and probably Ingria and Votia as well, as pagan regions, whether or not he took into account their status vis-a-vis Pskov or Novgorod. That he believed pagan lands around the Gulf of Finland were somehow subject to Novgorod is indicated by his statement that the 'Russian king' lost Häme, despite its probable anachronism. The Novgorodians failed to dislodge the Swedes from Viborg, but they did repulse an expedition to Käkisalmi in 1294. Some of these attacks may have been local initiatives, but Tyrgils Knutsson, *marsk* and regent for the young King Birger, was certainly behind the founding of a fortress at the mouth of the Neva in 1300, Landskrona. Once again, Novgorodian forces destroyed it soon afterwards.[150]

12.6. *Sweden tightens its grip on Finland*

According to *Erikskrönikan*, Sweden did more than simply build fortresses to secure its hold on Finland. The author claims that 'the satto thet land med crisn men' ('they settled the land with Christian men').[151] Immigrants from Sweden certainly settled Pohjanmaa, Varsinais-Suomi, Uusimaa (Sw. 'Nyland') and even, after the establishment of the fort at Viborg, some interior regions in its vicinity.[152] Place-names provide the bulk of the evidence for settlement, but do not provide clear evidence of when or how this settlement took place. The areas settled in the Middle Ages are substantially the same as the Swedish-speaking regions at the beginning of the twentieth century, which are now contracting. This settlement has often been thought of as the result of a deliberate plantation policy by royal government and perhaps the Church, but their power to implement such a policy may be questioned. As noted in Chapter 1, the medieval view of *gens* or *natio* does not equate to modern views on ethnicity

[149] Ek pp. 72–73, 77–88, 211–12.
[150] Ek pp. 83–88, FMU 233.
[151] Ek p. 32.
[152] Kaukiainen 1974 pp. 120–121.

or nationality, but there was nevertheless an awareness that settlement of newly conquered regions by people who were already adapted to the social *mores* of the new rulers strengthened their hold on these areas, besides providing income from their produce. In various parts of Europe such colonisation may have been encouraged by nobles or Military Orders, but if it took place on a large scale, as happened east of the Elbe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it also required initiative from families or communities of peasants or townsfolk.[153]

Swedish immigration into Pohjanmaa was spontaneous.[154] By the fourteenth century, Swedish-speakers lived in the coastal regions from the region of present-day Kokkola in the north to northern Satakunta (Kyrö) in the south, and some moved further inland during the later Middle Ages. They absorbed some Finnish speakers on the coast, but may have caused others to move elsewhere. Läntinen suggests that this new wave of colonisation began in the late thirteenth century, mostly from Norrland, shortly before the first written evidence of them.[155] Elsewhere in Finland evidence for royal, noble or ecclesiastical initiative in settlement is also weak. There is no evidence of aristocratic landholding complexes in the thirteenth century, and there were no monastic foundations to bring wild areas under cultivation. A large proportion of the place-names in Uusimaa contain personal names. A steady Swedish immigration is believed to have occurred into Varsinais-Suomi throughout the Crusade Period, and some historians and linguists believe that it began in Uusimaa before Birger Magnusson's crusade. It is probable that colonisation of these regions, largely by *bönder* (free farmers), was part of the general expansion of agriculture that also brought parts of northern Sweden under cultivation during the late thirteenth century. Some Swedes also went to the coasts of Estonia, where there was no Swedish authority. There may have been an element of encouragement by the crown, particularly in parts of Finland that would have been very much an unknown quantity to most *bönder*, such as those isolated parts of Karelia that had apparently remained unsettled by Finns or Karelians.[156]

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[153] See Chapter 1:2, n. 34.

[154] Uninhabited land this far north was *allmänning*.

[155] For instance, FMU 242 (from 1303), concerning a dispute between several settlers with Swedish names and some earlier inhabitants. On the subject of Swedish-speakers in Pohjanmaa, see Läntinen 1992 pp. 317–32.

[156] Sjöstrand 1995.

There remains the possibility that some of the first colonists of the post-1250 period were fleeing the region north of Mälaren after Birger Jarl's suppression of mid-century *folkunga* rebellions and the introduction of new taxes.

If some did settle in Finland to escape increasing taxation, they were not left alone for long. A clue to the existence of Swedish immigrant settlements in Finland is given by studies of medieval taxation, which suggest that some of the later taxes were already in place in the thirteenth century. In the later Middle Ages, as in Sweden itself, there was a variety of taxes of different types based on land area or households (*bol*, *mantal*, *fullskatt*). These are known mainly from records of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, after the *slottslän* had been created, based on the castles of Åbo (Fin. Turku), Raseborg (Raasepori), Tavastehus (Hämeenlinna) and Viborg (Viipuri). There is no way of estimating the revenue raised from Finland in 1300, as there are no extant tax records before the later fourteenth century, and those for Pohjanmaa and interior regions belong to the period after the *rök* tax had begun to supplant the *krok* in western Finland. However, Eljas Orrman estimated that half the number of tax *gårdar* (farms) that existed in Varsinais-Suomi in the early sixteenth century must already have been in place in the late thirteenth, and that the oldest Swedish taxes on produce might go back to the late twelfth century.[157] The assessment of *gårdar* as tax units in eastern Uusimaa occurred in the first decades of the fourteenth century at the latest, and earlier in western Uusimaa.[158] It is thought that *Hälsingelagen* was applied to the Swedish-speaking inhabitants of both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia, all referred to as 'hälsingar', including those in parts of Satakunta and Varsinais-Suomi. In the peace agreement of Nöteborg the Gulf of Bothnia was called 'Helsingh haff' (Hälsing-Sea).[159]

In the early fourteenth century there are references to *Kyrörätt*, applied in most of Satakunta, and *Tavasträtt*, mainly concerning taxation. In the thirteenth century customary laws must have continued to apply in the inland areas, but the local 'laws' were supplemented with tax obligations. One tax unit, the *krok* (Fin. *koukku* or, in eastern

[157] Orrman 1979 p. 294.
[158] Orrman 1983 pp. 231–33.
[159] FMU 313.

parts, *aatra/ardha*), may be based on a pre-Swedish tribute, as a comparable tax existed south of the Gulf of Finland and a virtually identical tax was levied in Karelia by Novgorod.[160] The names derived from those meaning 'ard' (Sw. *ård*), the primitive plough, and presumably originated as a tribute in farming areas, but like most taxes, it appears to have been levied in various forms, as produce or coin, but in the Finnish-speaking areas, furs. These were the main measure of value in the inland economy, so much so that the modern Finnish word for money, *raha*, originated as a word for squirrel skin. The *krok* first appears in a royal letter of 1334. By the late thirteenth century, possibly earlier, the Church also took tributes in the form of furs. In Tavastland (including Satakunta) a church (or priest's) tax was levied in furs or money (four 'white furs' or three *ore*) alongside the king's *krok*.[161]

The *Catalogus episcoporum* mentions a *tributum finonum* payable to the king after Björn (Bero) became bishop in Finland in 1249.[162] Whether this was a tax already payable to the bishop in Christianised areas (for instance, a tenth of a royal fur tribute), or part of a royal tax levied by the bishop on behalf of the king and then surrendered to the king in 1249, is not known. Kauko Pirinen has shown that there was a *rughskat* (fur tax) payable to the bishop that was transferred to the king in mid-century.[163] This probably marks the beginning of taxation by the realm as opposed to the Church. Even before this a *matskott* (food tax) was paid to priests before the regular canonical *tionde* was levied. As in the case of secular taxes, those paid to the Church differed fundamentally in type in Varsinais-Suomi and coastal regions, where taxes were paid according to yield of agricultural produce and meat from animal husbandry, and in the interior, where they were fixed by statute and usually paid in furs. The *tionde* was paid in accordance with *Hälsingelagen* or so-called 'Swedish law' (*ius suecicum*) in Varsinais-Suomi and southern Satakunta, for upkeep of the local church and priest, but the bishop also took a fixed tribute. In other coastal regions tax was paid as food under a system similar to the Swedish *gästning*. According to Pirinen, this tax, paid according

[160] Oja 1964 column 395. Novgorod levied a *plug* tax.
[161] REA 725. In other sources squirrel fur was also mentioned. White furs were presumably ermine or marten.
[162] Cat. Episcoporum (*Palmsköld*), column 627.
[163] Pirinen 1962 pp. 137–38, 176–79.

to *ius finnonicum* ('Finnish law') was levied in the areas with the oldest farms, as in the oldest agricultural regions of Sweden itself. The *tionde* was extended to Savo in 1329, soon after the border treaty with Novgorod, and also to the northernmost *socknar* of Pohjanmaa.[164]

From the time of Björn, probably earlier, bishops co-operated closely with the Dominican friars. Johannes, Bishop of Finland from 1286 to 1289, was himself a former prior at the Dominican convent of Sigtuna. The mendicants were well suited to dealing with the rural population, and provided invaluable service in collecting ecclesiastical taxes.[165] Nonetheless, as in Sweden to the west, problems with tax collection continued long after the Church had installed its priests throughout the settled regions, particularly in inland areas. In 1329, when Magnus Eriksson's government demanded that the inhabitants of inland areas paid the *tionde*, he included not only Savo and Karelia, but Häme. These demands were followed by another from the archbishop of Uppsala in 1330, and yet another in 1335.[166] Four letters had already been sent in 1329, demanding that the tax of four furs was paid. This had been reduced to three after the Novgorodian raids of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and the *hämäläiset* had refused to accept a return to its former level. As late as 1370 Bishop Johannes Petersson was threatening punishment for the peasants of Savo, who were not paying the fur tax.[167]

It has sometimes been suggested that the Swedish *ledung* obligations were also extended to Finland. Place-names provide evidence that many of the practices associated with *vakt* in the law codes of Svealand were extended to the Swedish settled coasts. Besides Swedish names, there are many Finnish equivalents, particularly those containing *vartio*, derived from Old Swedish *varþ* (as in *warþhald*).[168] It is not certain that all 'watch sites' were there because of enemy threat, as there were other risks to livelihood, such as wild animals. Moreover,

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[164] Luukko 1970 column 533, REA 111.
[165] Gallén 1958 columns 174–85.
[166] FMU 371, 373, 374, 383 and 425.
[167] FMU 781 (REA 211).
[168] Voionmaa 1925 pp. 1–44. Names such as Vartiovuori or Vartiomäki (1444—Wartiamäki, 'Watch-hill') are the equivalent of Bötesberget or Kasberget (*kas* probably means 'pyre', cf. Fin. *kokko*). In Swedish-speaking areas *var/d* and *vård* also corresponded to *varþ*. There are far more of these place-names on the coasts of Varsinais-Suomi and Uusimaa than in Pohjanmaa or inland areas.

a watch may well have been instituted with or without influence from Swedish law codes. There is less indication that the fleet *ledung* also existed in Finland, possibly a result of its declining importance by the time Finland was linked to Sweden, but it has been pointed out that the 1347 butter tax in Virolahti and Vehkalahti (eastern Uusimaa) corresponded to that in *Södermannalagen*, and that the *satamat* of Virolahti, Porvoo and Sipoo (Sw. Borgå and Sibbo), all consisting of some 72–75 houses, could correspond to the Swedish *hamnor*.[169] The suggestion made by Jokipii that there was probably a *ledung* in Satakunta, since *satakunta* corresponds to *hundare*, assumes that the *ledung* was integral to the *hundare*.[170] Since it is virtually certain that the *ledung* (patrol) fleet of the law codes was post-1150, it is hardly likely that this was introduced into Satakunta alongside the *hundare*. It may have been introduced later, either as fleet levy or tax, or both, but evidence for Swedish secular administration in Satakunta during the early and mid-thirteenth century is virtually non-existent.

In the fourteenth century the castles at Åbo, Tavastehus, Viborg and Raseborg became the bases for Swedish administration in Finland. According to *Erikskrönikan*, Viborg was built of stone soon after the crusade of 1293. Åbo and Tavastehus may also have been built just before the end of the thirteenth century.[171] If Ericus Olai is correct in stating that there was a *prefectus Finlandie* by 1280, this would be a likely time for the fort's construction.[172] Until Tavastehus was built, Hakoinen must have been the most important fort in the interior. Since it was on the edge of the settled region of Häme, it was presumably intended to establish a Swedish presence in Finland while allowing easy relief and communication with the homeland. This may indicate that the Swedes did not feel that their hold on Häme was secure until c. 1280. On the other hand, forts such as Linnosaari

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[169] Fin. *satama*—Eng. 'harbour'. See Kaukiainen 1970 pp. 80–91.

[170] Jokipii 1965 p. 240.

[171] Datings of the earliest levels of these castles have been made largely on the basis of building style, by comparison with similar fortifications in Sweden—as a result the estimates made Knut Drake for the date of construction at Tavastehus, for instance, have been continually revised as those for the construction of the main castle at Stockholm have been revised (to later dates).

[172] EOC 1:21, p. 87—*Karolus autem prefectus est Finlandie.* The entry is under 1278, but actually occurs when referring to the punishment of those implicated in the 1278 *folkunga* rebellion, in 1280. This Karolus may have been Karl Gustavsson, Magnus Ladulås's *marsk*, who is said to have fled to Novgorod in 1281.

or Vanhalinna could have been occupied by both Finns and Swedes together. Both had a common interest in defending (Varsinais-)Suomi and Häme from Novgorodians. Raids such as that of 1311, which penetrated into the heart of Häme, probably encouraged the natives to accept Swedish administration as the price of defence. At the same time it is interesting that many Finnish hill-forts were clearly in use long after 1250.[173]

Novgorod also responded to both the western threat and the danger of rebellion by building fortifications. As well as the fortification at Tiurunlinna, a fortification was constructed at Koporie in Ingria in 1297, probably on the site of one built by the Livonian Order in 1241. During the first decade of the fourteenth century Boris Konstantinovich tightened Novgorodian control over Karelia, reconstructing the fortress at Käkisalmi by 1310.[174] Despite this, or because of it, there was a rebellion in 1314. Finally, in 1322, the Novgorodians began a new fortification, Pähkinänlinna (Nöteborg), on the Neva. The Karelians were still not pacified entirely, as there were two further rebellions in 1337 and 1368.[175] The presence of the Swedes constituted both a threat to Karelia and Novgorod, and a potential ally for rebels.

12.7. *The nature of the conquest*

Despite the difficulties, the weight of evidence suggests that there was no permanent organisation above local chieftain level in Finland and Karelia, and certainly no reason to assume any form of polity conforming to any of the main settlement regions. The sheer number of hill-forts may be taken as evidence of political fragmentation, rather than central organisation. The siting of hill-forts and hoards does not always conform to known settlement, nor do they conform to each other. There is no consistency in burial practice even within the three settlement regions. The fact that there was a return to non-Christian funerary practices at Myllymäki, in contrast to the surrounding area, supports the contention that authority was largely in

[173] Taavitsainen 1994 pp. 229–30. There was even a find of an early cannonball at Linnamäki (Tenhola in Hattula).
[174] FMU 251; Kuujo, Puuramo and Sarkanen 1958 p. 50.
[175] Katajala 2002 p. 102.

the hands of village chieftains. It is possible that, left to their own devices, the different settlement areas of Finland might have developed a stronger sense of regional identity with regional institutions, but this is pure speculation. The sparse population and politically fragmentary nature of Finland and Karelia made them easy prey to more advanced and powerful neighbours, but they also presented their own problems to the 'conquerors', in that they had virtually no administrative structures to build upon and no central authority to usurp. The building of government administration was therefore a slow process, and so was Christianisation.

The character of Swedish armed interventions in Finland during the twelfth century was probably not very different from those of earlier periods: the acquisition of plunder and perhaps subjection to tributary status with the threat of a return and more devastation if this was not rendered. To this was added the new ingredient of a demand to convert to the new religion. This may have provided justification for the use of force, but it was easily disregarded by the natives once armies went home. There seems little doubt that most of Finland was Christianised through influence rather than force. The early thirteenth century reaction, such as it was, was probably brought about by the integration of Finland into the ecclesiastical province of Uppsala and the increasing imposition of ecclesiastical taxes, which therefore became associated with Christian beliefs. To the Pope, opposition to the Church and rejection of Christian belief were one and the same. Christian beliefs and customs may have spread without the use of force, but the authority of the Church could not be imposed without it.

In the 1220s, when Uppsala (in effect, Linköping) was endeavouring to strengthen the diocese of Finland, there is little evidence that either Sweden or Novgorod wished to govern any part of Finland directly. The various regions of Estonia were obviously considered a greater prize, being more heavily populated and more intensely farmed. The failure of Sweden's expedition to Estonia meant that the north shore of the Gulf of Finland was its best route to the Karelian isthmus and Ladoga, which would have secured control of an important trade route from Rus and in which it had a traditional interest. For Finnish historians and archaeologists Karelia has always assumed a special importance, related to its place in the national movement of the nineteenth century, but its economic importance to Novgorod was probably not as great as the regions to the

north and east, whose fur-trading posts are mentioned earlier in Russian sources.[176] Only when the danger that Sweden might seize control of Käkisalmi and the Neva route became clear did Karelia assume a strategic and economic importance to Novgorod that made close control imperative.

The level of subjection achieved by Birger Magnusson's Häme expedition that probably occurred in 1238–39 may not have been much higher than that achieved by previous attacks, but a fort was built on the southern periphery of the Vanaja settlement region. That there is no further record of hostility within Häme is testimony to the low level of opposition compared with that in Estonia. During the Folkung period the Swedish kingdom was better equipped to follow up the success of Birger Magnusson's campaign and strengthen its hold on central and eastern Finland than it had been before 1250. In the Middle Ages, the construction of strong fortresses was the key to the permanent holding of new conquests. This applied not only to the Swedes, but to the Teutonic Order on the south side of the Gulf of Finland—despite several heavy defeats in battle at the hands of the Lithuanians, the Order eventually secured its hold on Livonia, Estonia and Semgallia by building and garrisoning stone castles.[177] Swedish fortresses in Finland failed to prevent long-distance forays into Finland by Russian forces, but they did prevent conquest for four hundred years. Above all, the foundation of the fortresses of Åbo, Tavastehus and Viborg provided the basis for the growth of secular administration. Åbo and Viborg both grew into towns.

How much bloodshed was involved in the 'second crusade' to Häme (or, for that matter, Jaroslav's invasion of Karelia in 1278) will never be known. Given the politically fragmentary nature of both regions, it is possible that there were both pro- and anti-Christian factions. Both campaigns may have been brutal, but are equally likely to have been relatively bloodless, an episode in the gradual process of Christianisation and absorption by more powerful neighbours. The attitude of the natives of Finland to changing circumstances in the

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[176] Exploitation of these regions began long before this, but colonisation by both Russians and Finnic-speaking people appears to have begun in the Crusade Period. See Makarov 1992 p. 340.

[177] The Teutonic Order (Livonian knights) suffered heavy defeats in 1262 (Durben), 1270 (in Semgallia), 1279 (Ascheraden) and 1287 (Heiligenburg) and four of its masters were killed.

Crusade Period is more difficult to ascertain than that of Swedes and Novgorodians. We may assume that as the warfare in the region increasingly adopted the character of a Swedish-Novgorodian struggle, which probably increased the scale of destruction to a level unknown in the earlier Iron Age, *hämäläiset* and *suomalaiset* identified Karelians with those who attacked them and vice versa. Although it must have been impossible to prevent people from both sides of the 1323 border traversing it during hunting and fishing expeditions, its establishment must have reinforced a feeling of 'them and us'.[178] Political orientation was paralleled by cultural assimilation, as the material culture of Finland became increasingly western European and that of Karelia Russian. This is certainly reflected in later written sources; to the subjects of the Swedish crown, all those east of the 1323 border were *ryssar*, and to Novgorod and its allies all those to the west were *nemtsy*—there is no further mention of *jem*. To a large extent the natives were reliant upon their new masters to protect them. As competition for control of trade routes and Roman hostility towards the eastern Church intensified, many in Häme and Karelia may have welcomed Swedish and Novgorodian domination as the price of effective defence. When the Karelians rebelled in 1314, early in the period of assimilation, and called upon the Swedes to help them, it was a recognition that they could not survive independently.

The cause of Karelian rebellions was probably (as they saw it) excessive taxation, but may also have been the removal of local leaders. Further west, the return to pagan habits at Myllymäki and the 'pagan reaction' in Häme also occurred at the time when ecclesiastical taxation would have begun to bite and make Christianity less appealing. St Henrik's death poem provides an interesting possible insight into popular views of ecclesiastical demands, whenever its origin, since he is killed for taking too much from Lalli's house without asking. Lalli is portrayed in an almost sympathetic light, his wife being the real villain of the piece. Later rebellions in Finland, such as the fifteenth-century David uprising, were peasant risings of the type that affected much of Europe as the weight of royal taxation increased. It is difficult to ascertain the attitude of peasant rebels, since they left no records, but there is no evidence whatever that

[178] Gallén and Lind 1991.

these were 'Finnish' rebellions against Swedish rule, and little evidence of hostility between Finnish speakers and Swedish colonists. There is also no indication that there was any distinction between 'Swedes' and 'Finns' (Swedish and Finnish speakers) in the eyes of nobility or administration—as observed by Thomas Lindkvist, in the Middle Ages the most important distinction was between peasantry or tax *bönder* and landlords. In Estonia linguistic divisions coincided more closely with social divisions between townsfolk and peasantry and landlords and peasantry, which possibly contributed to the ferocity of the St George's Night rebellion in 1343, though even that is much debated.[179] Not until the 'Club War' of 1596–97 was there any rebellion as widespread as this in Finland.

A contributory factor to the relatively easy absorption of Finland into the Kingdom of Sweden may have been that elements of the pre-conquest native elite were able to participate in the new administrations, a circumstance that itself may have arisen from relatively bloodless conquest, but it has proved very difficult to trace Finnish roots for any of the late medieval nobility. This does not mean that there were none, but rather that sources are poor and any who became nobles probably adopted the language of the ruling class.[180] Nevertheless, a number of *moisio*-sites, such as those at Nousiainen and Lieto, correspond to later medieval manors, and are close to both Iron Age cemeteries with rich burials and sites of early churches that were constructed before parish organisation.[181] These early churches were presumably built on the initiative of a local elite, a pattern similar to that identified in Sweden itself. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the centres of administration were granted for specific terms to Swedish magnates, with all their estates and rights of taxation. Both they and their stewards were connected to Sweden by family ties, while their retainers probably intermarried with the richer settlers or natives and became the lesser nobility in the localities.

At the end of the reign of Magnus Ladulås administration in 'Österland' was still very rudimentary. Collection of taxes in the interior must have been a fairly haphazard business, and appears to have been largely in the hands of the Church and its agents. For

[179] Rebane 1974 pp. 35–49.
[180] Anthoni 1970.
[181] Haggrén 2005 pp. 12–26 (pp. 22–24).

this reason the parish (Sw. *socken*, Fin. *pitäjä*) must have been the most important administrative unit for both ecclesiastical and secular tax collection in the thirteenth century. The situation in this early period of Swedish rule in Finland was similar to that in Gotland, where the king had limited powers and a tax was collected by the bishop on his behalf. But Sweden's hold on Finland was secure—not until the Muscovite attack of 1495 was there any serious threat that any part of Finland might be conquered by any power outside the Scandinavian Union. The rise of more sophisticated state structures, aggressive proselytising by the Roman church, and the battle for Baltic trade probably meant that absorption by one or other state was inevitable for an area such as Finland, without any real unity of its own. That this did not occur in Finland until the mid-thirteenth century was largely because Sweden itself was in the process of state formation, and other Catholic powers had closer and richer heathen lands to subjugate first. The crusade gave extra impetus to moves by kings, newly empowered by internal taxation and the development of internal administration, to extend their control over neighbouring lands. Sweden had clear advantages over other (apparently stronger) powers that might have shown an interest in a more permanent presence in Finland, from geographical proximity and long association. In the thirteenth century, the Sword Brothers and later the Teutonic Order were fully occupied in controlling Livonia and Estonia and fighting a seemingly interminable war with Lithuania, Denmark's power began to weaken after Valdemar's misfortunes in the 1220s and during the internal crises that followed his reign, and Novgorod remained no more than a city-state, dominating neighbouring areas by enforcing tribute and controlling trade routes, its ruling elite lacking the resources to conduct military expeditions without the princes and their military retinues, but suspicious of them otherwise. In a sense, Sweden gained Finland by default.

CONCLUSION

The process of Sweden's transformation from a loose union of chiefdoms to a state was a long one. It must be borne in mind that written evidence for the period prior to 1250 is poor, and for the tenth century even poorer. Before that it is virtually non-existent. There is a danger that lack of evidence may be interpreted as lack of change. In addition, when evidence is sparse pieces of it that may be separated by many decades or even centuries, or by a considerable geographical distance, and which may therefore belong to different cultural or political circumstances, may be combined to provide evidence of a single institution or phenomenon. As a result, the earlier the period in Sweden's history, the more history appears to 'contract'. Bearing this in mind, and recognizing that the dates 1130 and 1290 are somewhat arbitrary, the period saw considerable socio-political change, particularly the second half of the thirteenth century. At the beginning of the twelfth century Sweden had changed little from the Viking Period, whereas by the end of the thirteenth century it was a part of a Europe-wide cultural and religious community.

Unquestionably, some of the groundwork for the formation of the Swedish state had already been laid in the eleventh century or even earlier. The historically attested regions of Sweden in the twelfth century, Götaland and Svealand, corresponded to the heavily populated areas of the Iron Age. It is possible to envisage a number of small kingdoms within the area later encompassed by the kingdom of Sweden, a 'peer polity network' of the type envisaged by Löfving, or Hodges for early Anglo-Saxon England. These kingdoms are likely to have competed with each other through emulation or confrontation, in the most extreme way by fighting wars, but not necessarily with the intention of permanent conquest. They must have traded with each other and co-operated periodically in religious festivals, for which Uppsala seems to have become an important centre. Given that authority in chiefdoms and petty kingdoms was essentially personal, when one polity did succeed in absorbing a tribute-paying sub-kingdom this is likely to have been achieved through intermarriage and manipulation of genealogical tradition. However, although a successive reduction in the number of polities throughout the Iron

Age may have been the overall pattern, there is no clear evidence that this was a general trend, as in Anglo-Saxon England or early Frankia. In the Viking Period Swedish kings still had the same limited resources for rulership that Anglo-Saxon kings had possessed in the sixth century. Rimbert's *Vita Anskari* mentions several kings in Svealand, all with weak authority. At this time emigration and enrichment of certain chiefs from trade and plunder probably disrupted any established order.

Whatever the relationship of Scandinavian polities to each other in the Iron Age and early Viking Period, Denmark achieved a dominant position within Scandinavia during the reigns of Sven Forkbeard and Knud the Great. The interaction between the Scandinavian kingdoms had assumed the character of a core-periphery relationship, in which information and ideas were diffused from central and western Europe, usually via Denmark, and this situation was maintained into the High Middle Ages, long after the collapse of Knud's 'empire'. Denmark achieved unity under one king earlier than Norway or Sweden, and provided the immediate impetus for change in these neighbouring kingdoms.

Olof Skötkonung's predecessor (and probable father), Erik Segersäll, may have claimed to rule a substantial part of the later medieval kingdom of Sweden, but Olof himself was maintained as king over Götaland and parts of Svealand by Knud. Although the first king who appears in written records as king of both *svear* and *götar* was Karl Sverkersson, it was generally accepted that all of Svealand and Götaland had one king by 1130, however this had come about. The tradition that a king was chosen first by the *svear* may have survived from a period when a kingdom in the region of the later Uppland was militarily dominant, but the cultural and religious importance of Uppsala must have played a part in maintaining it. However old this tradition was, kings from Olof onwards had to fight a protracted battle to enforce their authority there. Although there is no evidence that kings from Götaland had a monopoly of power in the eleventh century—for instance, Stenkil's origin is uncertain—the bulk of the landholdings of families that provided kings after 1130 lay within this region. Any attempt to assess the reasons for this must be to some extent speculative. Conditions in Iron Age Götaland, where settlements were larger but fewer, were probably more favourable than those in Uppland for the creation of magnate families that had sufficient resources of their own to command widespread authority.

By contrast, the settlement pattern in Uppland may have favoured the creation of a more fragmented power structure; this is not to say that there were no large estates, but that there was more of a balance of power between a number of landowners, rather than a few dominant magnate families. The election of kings from outside their own region by its chieftains, kings who therefore lacked authority in Svealand, was arguably designed precisely to avoid domination by any single local family. This may have become a tradition in itself, although several kings are known to have been elected south of Mälaren, bypassing election by the *svear* altogether.

At the same time, it appears that few great landowners from further south owned land north of Mälaren in the twelfth century, and that region may therefore have had its own peculiar identity. Its landowners were less exposed to new ideas and influences from central and western Europe and probably had closer connections in the eastern Baltic. However, no *svea*-centered landowners such as these are known by name, unless Karl and Haralder of 1229 were two of them, and the rebel leaders of the *upplenzska* of 1248 also belonged to an alliance that had a claim to the kingship of its own. The power struggles that took place in Sweden during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have often been seen in terms of king versus a nobility that wished to preserve a heterarchic power structure. This may have been the case in parts of Svealand, where there were several rebellions, but the sources are too poor to make a definitive statement that there was any consistent opposition to centralisation. Elsewhere in Sweden there is even less evidence of a landowning aristocracy that opposed it. Apart from those with connections to the Danish royal family, the Henriksens, the *Erikska ätten*, the *Sverkerska ätten* and the *Folkungaätten*, no other kin groups are known of from the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century the Algotssons appear to have been a powerful family with interests concentrated in Västergötland, but are not known to have resisted moves towards centralisation. Nor, as far as we can tell from lack of evidence, did the Boberg family. Whatever interest the twelfth- and early thirteenth-century *Folkungaätten* had at times in limiting the powers of incumbent kings, their interests and resources were dispersed with their estates, sometimes to their advantage, but also to the advantage of the kingdom, since this inhibited regional separatism.

After 1250 the kingship was in the hands of one family, but this in itself does not explain the dramatic changes that occurred in the

second half of the thirteenth century. Competition between rival dynasties before 1250 certainly caused disruption, but no more than the wars between rival members of the Folkung dynasty. Whether the need to raise revenue to fight wars was sufficient to bring about administrative change is a moot point; in chaotic conditions such as those of the Norwegian *borgerkriger*, when several armies often roamed the kingdom, conditions could be created in which revenue gathering amounted to looting rather than taxation, with a consequent disruptive effect on agriculture, the mainstay of the economy. Periods of peace were required to establish new and lasting forms of administration. In Sweden there is no evidence that reform occurred during actual periods of internal conflict, and the existence of a rival dynasty probably inhibited any attempt to make changes that might have been unpopular. The introduction of the *ledung* coastal fleet that preceded its transformation into a means of taxation was different matter, since it was designed to counter an external threat. Even this probably belongs to the reign of Knut Eriksson, who had killed or exiled his rivals and reigned for nearly thirty years, and it may have been acceptable because it also offered something to Birger Brosa, his most powerful subject. In the same reign coinage was reintroduced, beginning a slow monetisation of the economy. However, the one thing that might have been perceived as a threat to the interests of the great magnates and which we have evidence that Knut probably attempted, the establishment of hereditary succession, was prevented.

Despite the hypothetical constructions of archaeologists, there is no good evidence for effective central administration in Sweden before 1130, and no reason to think kings had the resources to implement it. At a local level there were districts that functioned primarily as judicial entities, *hundare* and *härader*, and their subdivisions. They are likely to have originated as districts controlled by local nobility, or at least created with their acquiescence, when the king exercised little authority over them. The different names for the districts in Svealand (with the possible exception of Närke, where no *hundare* division is known to have existed) and Götaland suggest an origin either before there was a king of both *svear* and *götar*, or at the very least in a period when central authority was simply too weak even to impose a consistent nomenclature. At the beginning of Sverker's reign the king possessed a series of *kungsgårdar, husabyar* and *bogårdar* as a right of office, which probably acted both as symbols of the

king's power and a means of raising revenue. The former were almost certainly established in the period 1050–1200, given that they were often secondary settlements and re-named older sites, but the *bogårdar* were probably inherited from earlier kings or sub-kings of the *götar*. These *gårdar* are more likely to have extended the king's influence by providing bases for his itinerary or that of his representatives, or simply to have functioned as craft or trading centres and markers of the king's presence, than to have managed the *hundare* or *härader*. Similarly, by the thirteenth century, certain districts within Svealand, the *hamnor*, equipped the king's *ledung*, but the majority of *hundare* were divided instead into *åttingar*. In a sense the king's administration existed alongside that of the nobility, rather than above it, and its creation was one of slow encroachment rather than rapid change. Before 1250 an assortment of taxes existed, mostly based on the traditional rights of the king regarding board and lodging, and administration remained rudimentary.

The survival of institutions such as the *ting*, *hundare* and *härad* from the late Viking Period to the period when the laws were codified does not necessarily imply that these were managed in the same way throughout, or that they necessarily had the same functions. The same applies to use of terminology such as *ledung*, which might have had quite different meanings in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Old institutions could be adapted and sometimes taken over by royal officials and old positions that were once appointed by local *bönder* might become royal appointments. At various points in the *landskapslagar* there are statements that suggest local control over the appointment of *lagmän* or controls over sale of land outside the kin-group, but evidence from other sources or even the law codes themselves suggests this was not the case. The king usurped many rights, rather than repealing them.

The High Middle Ages witnessed dramatic development throughout Europe. It was a time of favourable climatic conditions and agricultural and urban expansion, accompanied by increased trade and population growth. However, the economic resources of Sweden were much more limited than those at the disposal of English or French kings and nobles in the same period. The battles for power that occurred in the Scandinavian kingdoms may be seen in the light of elite groups battling over restricted resources, but Carneiro's model of conflict is more applicable to Norway than Sweden, where surplus population was able to being new lands under cultivation. On

the other hand, important sources of wealth that had been available to Swedish nobility in the Viking Period dried up, as lands that had once been plundered were better defended and sea trade more regulated. Some trade outlets that may have been controlled by kings or nobility in the Viking Period declined in importance, such as Birka and Sigtuna, and were even threatened by attacks from Wends, Kuronians and Estonians. There was undoubtedly some competition over control of intensified agricultural production and craft production, but the importance of this relative to other factors that may have caused conflict is difficult to measure. Restricted opportunity for gathering wealth overseas nevertheless gave an impetus to internal social reorganisation. As noted in chapter 1, the general pattern in High Medieval Europe was one of movement towards hierarchic government, albeit with considerable variations from region to region. Even in the Iron Age there will certainly have been unequal access to resources among rival kinship groupings or alliances, which would have forced some landowners into a client relationship with others. In a heterarchy, however, these were shifting and often unstable. The actions of the *Folkungaätten* in dispersing their estates around the realm in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century may be evidence that they at least saw the realm as a hierarchy. The aim of Birger Brosa, his brothers and his sons was to maximize their influence over the central authority, the king, rather than to deliberately diminish its power, even if they sometimes did this in their own interests. In this respect their actions are comparable to those of powerful kindreds further south, such as the Hvide in Denmark or the early Staufer in Germany.

For all the weakness of central government at the beginning of this period, in the institution of a single Swedish kingship existed the potential for increased integration, and evidence for concerted opposition to this is weak, although it may have existed in eastern Svealand. The ability to make a claim for the kingship was at least limited by custom to those whose ancestors had been kings, or, in the event of their dying out, those who had the closest family connections to them. Events in the twelfth century suggest that successive kings had little effective power outside the region where their own inherited lands lay. As a result, to preserve their position several were forced to make alliances with powerful noble families. By this means the *Folkungaätten* secured its power base in the kingdom, since it provided the means for the *Erikska ätten* kings to rule Östergötland, the wealthiest

land in the realm before the thirteenth century. The establishment of the type of *ledung* service known from the later law codes, perhaps connected to the creation of a *jarladöme* for Knut Eriksson's ally Birger Brosa, may represent one of the few significant administrative changes introduced in the twelfth century.

Once the deposition of surplus wealth as offerings had ceased in the Migration Period it was used primarily for redistribution among the elite. In the post-Roman Iron Age the origins of private land ownership have also been identified by archaeologists. Medieval *bordsrätt* is a probable survival of customary practice that was intended to prevent land held by the extended family or kin group from being alienated. Some customary controls were necessary for a pre-literate society in which the ultimate arbiter of ownership was force. The same concern to lay claim to lands can be seen through the importance placed on inheritance on rune-stone scripts. The introduction of concepts derived from Roman Law, written contracts and land measurements will have changed the way in which ownership was understood, but may also be seen as the conclusion of a process begun in the Iron Age, which made tribute gathering and taxation by elites easier. As a recognised higher authority, a chief or king was no doubt asked to give judgement in disputes long before the introduction of modified Roman law, but the procedure became increasingly complex, with different levels of judicial process. As occurred elsewhere in Europe, when laws were codified and new laws devised to handle disputes that arose in new circumstances, the ultimate judgement authority became the king, whose capacity and duty to do this was emphasised by Christian kingship ideology. As the final arbiter in the expanding legal system the king's right to confiscate lands from those who challenged his authority and also to dispose of land became enshrined in law. Processes to prevent endemic feud were becoming increasingly sophisticated, and would in time replace force as the preferred means of settling disputes.

Old customs concerning family ownership of land died hard in Scandinavia. It is probable that some of the conflicts over land ownership recorded from this period, particularly between monasteries and *bönder*, derived from alienation of family land through donations or sale. Despite its reiteration in the *landskapslagar*, *bordsrätt* was being eroded by new forms of transfer and new forms of service. In the reign of Magnus Ladulås wealthier *bönder* were encouraged to serve the king as *frälse*. The effect was most dramatic in peripheral regions

such as Småland, nominally part of the kingdom, but virtually devoid of *kungsgårdar* and therefore previously beyond the king's reach. Many of the new *frälse* built manors outside earlier settlements, so that they were seen and began to see themselves as exercising authority over land rather than people. In Magnus's reign there is also clear evidence of the loan of lands (*pantlän*) in return for personal service, similar to that in other European kingdoms. Rules concerning the non-alienation of royal land, like those concerning ownership of land by the kin-group, were being eroded. The increasingly widespread use of written contracts and uniform land measurements, particularly the *markland*, meant that the old concept of personal lordship was being replaced by territorial lordship. Ultimately, the kingdom would become territorialised, the king no longer king of the *svear* and *götar* but king of Sweden, and he would be seen as the disposer of all of its land.

Other factors that would strengthen the kingship and the unity of the kingdom were also at work. By 1130 the aristocracy of Götaland and the great majority of those in Svealand had already embraced Christianity, and the archaeological evidence suggests that it had been widely accepted among the rest of the population in the agriculturally rich regions of Götaland, Södermanland and immediately north of Mälaren, and also in Närke. Conversion did not in itself increase the unity of the realm, but, rather like the kingship of the *svear* and *götar*, had the potential to do this. The Roman Church had long since adopted a policy of converting rulers first and using them to convert their subjects, and in order to do so had promoted the king as the 'natural' authority, sanctioned by God to rule. Since Roman Christian ideology had been modified by that of the post-Roman Germanic elites, it was not wholly alien to the Scandinavian elite, whose pagan beliefs had also been influenced by it. In the medieval kingdoms of Europe king and Church both had an interest in extending their authority, and integrating the different regions under a single authority, and together acted as the main agents of state formation in Sweden.

In the mid-twelfth century the transformation from missionary church to established church was completed: thenceforth ecclesiastical appointments usually came from Sweden itself and ecclesiastical sees became centres of power. Christianity may have been a disruptive force during its period of establishment, but once this was completed it provided a cohesion in belief which localised pagan

cults could not. It also provided a new ideological basis for royal power and an institutional network to propagate it. Sweden was Christianised at a time when a reinvigorated papacy was attempting to exert control over ecclesiastical institutions and congregations everywhere, thus threatening to undermine royal authority in realms where it had already been established, but in recently converted kingdoms, where local landowners controlled churches, the interests of king and Church in establishing an overall authority over them coincided. The Church relied on the king as a guarantor of peace and security. The province of Uppsala was an additional unifying force for Sweden after its creation in 1164. With the exception of Jämtland, which was subject to the Norwegian king, its boundaries defined the Swedish kingdom. After 1164 ecclesiastical authority over all Sweden lay within Sweden itself, albeit, in theory, still under the authority of Lund.

An attempt to secure a Swedish archbishopric had probably been made earlier by Sverker I, whose reign had seen the considerable strengthening of the Church in Götaland, not least through the establishment of monasticism. Many of the new institutions owed their continuing existence to royal authority, rather than local nobility. Sverker's successors continued his policy, and by and large supported the Church in its efforts to enforce the *tionde*, increase control over *socken* churches, and (perhaps less enthusiastically) secure freedom from taxation and military service. This is not to suggest that successive kings were deliberately attempting to construct a Swedish *reichskirche*, of the type suggested (and disputed) by several German scholars, merely that the interests of Church and state generally coincided. The close link between kings and Church led some clerics to promote the image of Christian kingship through saints' cults, although there is little evidence that Swedish kings themselves actively encouraged this until the very end of the period. By 1300 Sweden had produced no national saint like Olaf, no sagas eulogising its kings' exploits, and no royal propagandist like Abbot Suger. Nothing is known of the Swedish coronation ceremony before the fourteenth century, and although sacral elements were no doubt introduced in its oaths and proclamations, it should be emphasised that even in relatively centralised high medieval kingdoms such as England these words represented an ideal of the king's authority rather than the reality. Nevertheless, even in Sweden the institution of kingship was on the road to achieving sacral status.

In the European Middle Ages it was also the Church that provided the necessary training for those who subsequently became royal advisors and administrators. The development of a written culture is undeniably one of the basic requirements for state formation, as it provides the foundation for administration and codified law. In Sweden written law-codes appeared only at the end of the thirteenth century, and drew heavily upon earlier European law-codes, themselves derived largely from the Roman and Mosaic tradition. General uniformity in legal custom between the separate *land* of Sweden was a product of this common origin, rather than central direction. Older customary practices were not obliterated but modified, while it was emphasised that all law emanated from the king, who was the guarantor of order. If Scandinavia lacks the works of jurists that proliferated in England, France, Germany and Spain during the thirteenth century, the influence of judicial training is clearly evident in the *landskapslagar*. In 1300, there was still no kingdom-wide law code and judicial institutions were heavily regionalised. On the other hand, with the exception of ecclesiastical canon law, there was no tradition of law outside the regional *ting* system, such as the manorial law that existed in Anglo-Norman England and France. By the turn of the fourteenth century the king was able to exert his influence by controlling the courts that dealt with the most serious breaches of the peace, those which threatened royal authority, and the courts of appeal. All these changes gave the king increased coercive power. In the period when the names of the *lagmän* are first recorded, the thirteenth century, they appear to have been members of the upper nobility. Around the turn of the fourteenth century an increasing number of them also served the king in other capacities.

No doubt, as elsewhere in eleventh- and twelfth-century Europe, the common acceptance of a social system and common cultural *mores* provided the cement which held society together, rather than legally defined rules and contracts, which were characteristic of a later period. However, the preservation of order and the survival of a king was also dependent on his own network of friends and kinship alliances. These could be extensive in a system of bilateral kinship. The limited evidence at our disposal indicates that the internal wars and rebellions of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sweden resulted largely from conflict between such networks, whose leading personalities sought to avoid being marginalised in the decision making process, in other words, excluded from the king's counsel, or possibly

from the kingship itself, if any of their number had a claim to it. The change that enabled the administrative reforms of the Folkung Period was Birger Jarl's destruction of those who opposed increased royal authority in Svealand. This itself occurred within the context of a dynastic feud: there is no reason to think that Birger Jarl had any strategy beyond securing the kingship for his own son. However, he was prepared to take drastic measures and to make disruptive changes if it suited his purpose, a contrast, perhaps, to his more conservative predecessor as *riksjarl*, Ulf Fase. As a result of his elimination of rivals and confiscations, together with the earlier extinction of the male line of Sverker, when Birger Jarl's family gained the kingship there was no rival kin-group with equal resources, a situation in marked contrast to that of former *Erikska ätten* and *Sverkerska ätten* kings and dynasties such as the Capetians when they came to power in France.

Although not necessarily a coherent process, a decisive change in the nature and extent of government occurred within a relatively short space of time in Sweden, the reigns of Birger Jarl's two sons. However, even if in retrospect the early Folkung period does represent a turning point, there was no attempt to sweep away the old administrative structures, but new ones such as the *län* were built on top of them. Similarly, alongside new administrators the old ones remained, even if, in many cases, they became tax collectors instead of ship outfitters and helmsmen. There is no suggestion that subsequent *folkunga* rebellions seriously threatened the Folkung dynasty. Whatever had been lost by the wealthier landed nobility was more than compensated for by the concessions they received from Magnus Ladulås, but at the same time their new status tied them closer to the institution of kingship and its administration, while distancing them from the bulk of the population. They received their privileges in return for service to the king, and thenceforth this was their route to wealth and power. This did not mean, however, that they were necessarily loyal to individual kings, whose position remained weak by comparison with the hereditary kings of England or France. In Sweden the election of kings was not just a fictive process, as it was in England. Despite this, Magnus Ladulås commanded far greater financial and material resources, and as a result greater coercive power, than his predecessor Knut Eriksson had a century earlier. The growth of royal administration unquestionably speeded up a

process of integration of the different regions of Sweden. In 1290, it was the peripheral and poorer regions of the country over which the king exercised weak control, rather than heavily populated and agriculturally rich regions such as Svealand and Östergötland.

In the Folkung Period the biggest break with the past occurred in Svealand, where new taxes were introduced alongside new land measurements. However, change must have been apparent throughout Sweden. Powerful castles were built to house mints and royal administrators, and increased taxation provided the resources to pay for permanent officials and soldiers. In Sweden the building of large stone castles was quite simply beyond the means of all but kings with sources of revenue such as those that appeared in the Folkung Period. A situation such as that in western and central Europe, where local nobility had been able to build castles that inhibited kings from suppressing their activities, had never developed in Sweden or Norway—there a jump was made between a tradition of warfare that was not dependant on fortifications to a situation in which the king had the greatest resources to defend his wealth and to reduce any defences the lower nobility could construct. This may have been an intentional result of castle building, but an incidental outcome was a further stimulant to urban growth. Although 'royal power' is frequently cited as one of the factors behind the appearance of towns, only Stockholm grew from a royal foundation. Nor did any of the earlier *husabyar* grow into larger settlements.

It is no accident that the changes which occurred in Sweden between 1100 and 1300 bear many comparisons with those in other kingdoms in the same period, particularly in northern and east-central Europe. In a general sense all these polities underwent a similar transformation, although each had its own distinct character due to topographical, ethnic and cultural variance. The forces at work were often the same; increasing penetration by the Roman Church, agricultural expansion, population growth and urban expansion, which provided increased potential for exploitation by government. In addition, all these realms had to resist pressure, or even the threat of absorption, from better organised kingdoms. Norway and Sweden were threatened by Denmark, Scotland by England, and Hungary and Poland by Germany, as Denmark itself had been. In order to compete more effectively with their neighbours, their elites perceived that they had to emulate them, but a greater impetus to imitate may

have been simple self-preservation, in that the ideological and material props of the kings of England, France and Germany seemed to offer a better chance of retaining power.

With the increasing resources at their disposal, the Folkung kings were also able to extend their authority into a region that was sparsely populated and subject to no other Christian overlord, the present-day territory of Finland. Before the late thirteenth century, even if isolated garrisons had been placed there, the only external authority in Finland was that of the Roman Church, after 1216 the province of Uppsala. As they had been in Sweden itself, both the Pope and the Archbishop of Uppsala were aware that they needed the sanction of secular power to secure their authority. The building of stone castles and the advent of royal taxation marks the beginning of the real absorption of Finland, or Österland, as it came to be known, into the kingdom of Sweden. This process was eased by the fragmentary nature of socio-political structures within the region. Beyond the usual resistance to paying taxes, it is difficult to know what the attitude of the natives of Häme or Varsinais-Suomi was to royal government, but this may also be said of the other regions in the kingdom.

There is no question that Sweden represents a case of 'secondary state formation' in that it imported almost all its new institutions and practices. The period 1130–1290 was the era in which the greatest influx of 'foreign' culture and institutions occurred. As such it was a period in which a large step was taken towards the establishment of a Swedish state, although it would be pointless to argue that it was the single most important period in this process. At the end of the thirteenth century Sweden differed little in many respects from the other kingdoms of western and central Europe whose culture its elite had embraced. Government was still dependant on personal contact and large regions were still dominated by trusted kin or friends. Sweden still had regionalised power structures in 1290, and the king still had to place considerable power in the hands of other nobles such as Bengt Magnusson in Småland and Östergötland. Nevertheless Sweden, including Finland, survived the later turmoil of plague, economic contraction and repeated rebellions. The Scandinavian Union of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was unable to subsume the kingdoms it was made up from. When Sweden left the Union in 1523, it re-emerged with its own king, and the institutions that his administration was built on were essentially those that had existed at the end of the reign of Magnus Ladulås.

APPENDIX ONE

FAMILIES AND THEIR LANDHOLDINGS

A.1.1. *Danish kings*

Our knowledge of lands owned by the Danish kings in Sweden derives largely from the inventory in Valdemar II's *jordebog*. The possessions listed as *Sigridlev* were believed to derive from 'Sigrid Storråda', the wife of Erik Segersäll and later Sven Forkbeard, according to Snorri. Several sources tell us of her wealth, including Snorri Sturluson and the B 17 king list.[1] The latter late source says specifically that Sigridlev was named after 'Sigrid the rich (or powerful)'. The name Sigrid is not recorded in any source from the period of Erik Segersäll, but Thietmar and Adam of Bremen both say that Erik Segersäll was married to a Polish princess, almost certainly the sister of Boleslav Chrobry, who married Sven after Erik's death.[2] The lands may well have passed into the hands of the Danish king through this queen, whatever her actual name was.

Other lands were inherited from Margareta Fredkulla, granddaughter of King Stenkil.[3] Both Snorri and Saxo mention her marriages, and Saxo recounts the division of her lands into three parts.[4] Her last marriage was to King Niels of Denmark, and as a result

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[1] SSH 1, *Olafs saga Tryggvasonar* 43, p. 193.

[2] Thietmar 8:39, pp. 216–17, and ABG 2:37, *schol.* 24. Thietmar says specifically that the princess was Boleslav's sister. Although the practice of renaming foreign princesses with a native name when they came from abroad to marry was frequently followed in Anglo-Saxon England and Normandy, in Scandinavia Slavic princesses usually retained their names, but these were subsequently 'scandinavicised', rather than changed altogether (Dragomir-Dagmar, Ryksa-Rikissa etc.). A Polish genealogist of the Piast dynasty, Kasimierz Jasiński, suggests that 'Sigrid' was a daughter of Mieszko named Świętosława: Jasiński 1990 (with English summary). Snorri says Sigrid was a daughter of Sköglar-Tósti: SSH 1, *Haralds saga Gráfeldar* 11, p. 143. Thietmar and Adam, writing nearer the time of the event, are more likely to be correct, but Thietmar was prone to confusing names and relationships outside his own region.

[3] See Beckman 1912 p. 4.

[4] Saxo 13:1 pp. 108–10 and 13:5, pp. 120–22, SSH 2, *Magnúss saga berfætts* 15, p. 711 and 24, p. 736.

some of Margareta's lands went to his son Magnus, killed at Fotevik. Some of these lands were sold by his grandson Knud Magnussen, who fled to Sweden after his defeat by Sven Grade in 1151.[5] He gave a further third of his lands as a dowry to Sofie, his sister, who became queen of Valdemar I. More of Margareta Fredkulla's lands were given as a dowry to her niece Ingrid, when she married Harald Gille. According to Snorri Ingrid had nine children by at least five men, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian, which must have resulted in the fragmentation of her part of her aunt's lands.[6] Another niece of Margareta, Ingeborg, was given lands when she married Knud Lavard, who had only one known son, the later Valdemar I.[7] When his son Knud died, all ended up in the hands of his second son, Valdemar II.

According to Saxo, Valdemar I also inherited land from Sverker, presumably because Sverker supported Sofia, his stepdaughter (see below) and donated land to Valdemar when he and Sofia were married. This land was probably in Östergötland, where more was acquired after the death of Burislev, son of Sverker and Sofia's brother, as listed in the *jordebog*. According to *Östgötalagen* a sister inherited if no brother lived, and this must have applied before the law code was written down, just as it appears to have applied in Västergötland. Sofia's lands went to her son Valdemar II.

Two kings of Sweden in the early twelfth century were Danish. The first was King Magnus Nielsen, who inherited his right to the Swedish kingship from his mother Margareta, daughter of Inge the Elder (died c. 1110). The short-lived king of c. 1160–61, Magnus Henriksen, was the last Dane to become king before the establishment of the Scandinavian Union in 1398. Magnus was a son of Henrik Skadelår and Ingrid, daughter of Ragnvald, a son of Inge the Elder.[8] Henrik himself was a son of Sven, one of the sons of King Sven Estridsen. Magnus Henriksen's brother Knud had been made Duke of Sleswig by Sven Grade, and he appears as *dux* in the witness list for the foundation of the Cistercian monastery of Vitskøl.[9]

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[5] Saxo 14:4, p. 370.

[6] SSH 2, *Magnúss saga blinda og Haralds Gilla* 1, p. 747 and *Saga Inga konungs og bræðra hans* 14, pp. 778–79. Ingrid is not mentioned by name in Saxo's history, but is called daughter of Margareta's brother Regnaldus (Rognvald): Saxo 13:1, p. 110.

[7] Saxo 13:1, p. 110.

[8] Saxo 13:1, pp. 109–10.

[9] Saxo 14:20, p. 416, and DD 120 (1158).

Earlier, in c. 1150, he had been driven out of the region by Valdemar, so this was a restoration. Another brother, Buris, was probably resident in Jylland, since he made significant donations to the Cistercian monastery of Tvis from the *syssel* of Hard.[10] Magnus has been identified as the Magnus in Rasmus Ludvigsson's early seventeenth-century donator list for Vreta monastery, although Rasmus himself mistook Magnus and Ragvald for Magnus Nielsen and Ragnvald Knaphövde.[11] A King Henrik donated *ten attungar* of land in Vreta *socken* to the monastery on behalf of him and his deceased brother Ragnvald, who may be identified with the Ragnvald of Snorri Sturluson, said to have been a jarl when his brother was king.[12] Both probably owned land in Östergötland.

A.1.2. *The* Sverkerska ätten

Aside from the evidence provided by the *Liber Census Danie* there is little direct evidence of the landholdings of the leading Swedish families, which must be deduced as far as possible from the landholdings of descendants and records of donations, sales and exchanges of land. Fortunately there are records for this period, even if sparse, which means that at least the bare outlines of the situation and the power struggles which occurred around the throne can be ascertained. *Sverkerska ätten* genealogies appear in Olaus Petri's chronicle, Rasmus Ludvigsson's notes on Vreta nunnery, and Johan Bures's book *Sumlen*.[13] The last list is thought to derive from Varnhem, via a fifteenth-century Franciscan friar, Johannes Petri. Rasmus's sources are unknown, but clearly different from Olaus Petri's.[14]

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[10] DD 152.

[11] Ahnlund 1945 pp. 321–28, referring to Rasmus Ludvigsson's 'Om Vreta Clöster', incorporated in Johan Perinskjöld's *Monumenta per Ostrogothiam* (folio h. 7, Kungens Bibliotek). Ahnlund showed clearly that Rasmus's identification of Magnus and Ragnvald does not make sense chronologically or genealogically. Among earlier scholars, Messenius was apparently troubled by the identification as early as the seventeenth century. One of the others was Peder Månsson Utter, who also listed yet another brother of Magnus Henriksen, Johan, who, if he existed, must have died before Ragnvald, since Magnus allegedly made a donation to Vreta for his soul. In addition, Snorri, in the passage listed below, says that a brother Orm fled to Magnus in 1161, after the defeat and death of the Norwegian King Inge.

[12] SSH 2, *Hákonar saga herðibreiðs* 18, p. 785.

[13] Johan Bures *Sumlen*, in Kungens Bibliotek (bl. 579), Palmsköldska samling 208, p. 75, Uppsala Universitets Bibliotek.

[14] Ahnlund 1945 pp. 338–39.

According to Olaus Petri the *Sverkerska ätten* stemmed from a certain Kettil, who went to his burial mound three years before his death because of his opposition to Christianity, but he is clearly a mythical figure, paralleled in other Scandinavian tales and genealogies. Olaus gives the name of Sverker the Elder's father as 'Kornike', *Sumlen* as 'Karnuke', and the *Västgötalagen* king list as 'Cornubæ'. A variety of explanations for this name have been given, many assuming errors in copying and proposing new spellings. Suggestions for the original form have included 'Korn Ubbe' ('Wealthy Ubbe') and 'Col Nuva'.[15] In several Icelandic sagas Sverker is given the patronymic Kolsson. Sverker married the widow of King Niels of Denmark, Ulfhild. Ulfhild's father was Håkon Finnson, one of the powerful Norwegian Tjotta family, and she had also earlier been married to the Swedish king Inge the Younger, but after his expulsion she left this marriage, giving her the chance to become queen again.[16] According to Bishop Brask (d. 1527) Alvastra, where the king and queen founded a Cistercian monastery in 1143, was given to Queen Ulfhild by Sverker as a morning gift. In the same year they founded another monastery on the island of Lurö in Lake Vänern.[17] Land from Sverker and Ulfhild's inheritance was donated to both.[18] The monks of Lurö soon left and ended up in Varnhem in Västergötland. Land was later donated to Vreta by Karl Sverkersson from possessions inherited from his father,[19] and a later record tells us that he also gave away a *gård* in Synnerby. Sverker II (the Younger) later donated Skarpakloster (of uncertain location), Sundby on Munsön and Gorratung to Gamla Uppsala church.[20] His son Johan donated the village of Kimstad to Vreta nunnery and land from an estate he had inherited in Bankekinds *härad* to Gudhem.[21] His sister Helena and her husband Sune, son of Folke Jarl, must also have owned

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[15] See, for instance, Henrik Schück 1914 pp. 33–36, Beckman 1912 p. 8, and Ahnlund 1945 p. 343. It has also been suggested that the name was really that of a female: Kjellberg 1923b p. 3.

[16] A. Schück 1953a p. 28.

[17] SMHD 2, *Narratiuncula de fundatione monasterii Vitaescholæ in Cimbria* (The tale of the foundation of Vitskøl monastery in Jylland), pp. 128–42.

[18] DS 119. Nydala was also founded in 1143, by Bishop Gisle, and on his land (north of the Rusken lake).

[19] Brask's sources are unknown: see SRS 3:2, p. 297.

[20] Beckman 1912 p. 10.

[21] DS 115, DS 160, DS 181.

land at Kimstad, since they withdrew all claim to it and it passed to Vreta nunnery in perpetuity in 1237.[22] It is not impossible that this land was Sune's inheritance rather than Helena's, but its proximity to Johan's land suggests the latter.

After Ulfhild's death Sverker I married Rycheza, daughter of Boleslav III of Poland, whose name (in its Swedish form Burislev) was given to some of Sverker's descendants. She had earlier been married to Sverker's predecessor Magnus Nielsen, and after his death to Volodar, Prince of Minsk, by whom she had a daughter Sofia. Rycheza was also mother of Magnus's son Knud, who followed her to Sweden. Sverker's Danish connections resulted in war between the two lands when he supported Knud against Sven (Grade), the son of Erik Emune, in a failed bid to gain the Danish throne.[23] Knud is known to have married a daughter of Sverker, whose name must have been Helena, since the death date of an 'Elena Regina' (31 December), a name otherwise unrecorded among the queens of Denmark, is recorded in the *Necrologium Lundense*.[24] This was presumably the same queen Helena who donated land in Slaka *socken* to Vreta nunnery, where Ingegärd, daughter of Sverker and Ulfhild and therefore Helena's sister, was prioress during Knut Eriksson's reign. Sofia, under Sverker's wardship as a result of his marriage to her mother, was married to Knud Magnussen's rival, Valdemar (incidentally the son of Knud Lavard, who had been murdered by Knud Magnussen's father). He was the eventual victor in the mid-twelfth-century struggle for the Danish kingship.

Saxo also tells us that part of Sverker I's inheritance ended up in the hands of Valdemar I of Denmark, but it is not clear how this might have happened. Valdemar's wife Sofia probably inherited many of her stepfather's lands after his son Burislev (her brother) died. This Burislev is recorded as a son of Sverker only in the *Liber census Daniæ*. Assuming this is correct, he was probably a son by Sverker's second marriage, since his name derives from Boleslav, the name of Rycheza's father. Nothing else is known of him or his possible fate.[25]

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[22] DS 295.

[23] Saxo 14:4–5, pp. 370–72; 14:11–12, pp. 384–87; 14:17, 398–99.

[24] This Helena was once thought to be the queen of Inge the Elder, but any record of the death of a Swedish queen would have been an exception in the *Necrologium*.

[25] Some have maintained that Burislev was son of Sverker and Ulfhild, but it seems unlikely that he would have been named after Boleslav when the latter was not yet a relative, and no other related Boleslav among Sverker's ancestors is known of.

The statement of *Östgötalagen* that a sister inherits if no brother remains applied in Västergötland as well as Östergötland. Another relative of Sverker, Kol, also died during Knut Eriksson's reign, in which case Sofia may have inherited lands from him as well. As closest relative to Burislev and stepdaughter to Sverker she may have acquired as much as a half of Sverker's lands in Östergötland, allowing for confiscations by Knut after the failure of rebellions. Not all the lands are named in the Danish land register. Some estates from Sigridlev were inherited by Valdemar's illegitimate son Knud of Blekinge, also *Hertug* of Estonia (d. 1260). One of Knud's sons was Svantepolk Knudsen, who became a great landowner in Östergötland (as well as being its *lagman*) as a result. He may well have inherited all the Swedish lands of his father, while his brother Erik, who became *drots* in Denmark, took the Danish possessions. Svantepolk thus inherited a large part of Sverker's lands.

Sverker I had at least two sons by his first marriage, one of whom, Karl, was to become king after he defeated Magnus Henriksen at Örebro in c. 1161. However, Karl was probably not Sverker's eldest son: although this is not stated explicitly, in Saxo's history his most active son, and apparently the one expected to defend Sweden against the Danes had he not been killed at a *ting* meeting (probably in 1253), is Johan.[26] Johan may be the same as the Jon Jarl who appears in *Erikskrönikan* and the 'dux magne Johannes' of a Linköping tombstone. There is no record of any marriage, but three later members of the *Sverkerska ätten* may have been his sons.[27] Two, Kol and Burislev (not to be confused with the son of Sverker), are recorded in several king lists as having fallen in the reign of Knut Eriksson. Another appears in several sources as Ulf Jarl. However, their precise relationship with each other and with other members of the family is uncertain.

According to Olaus Petri, another son of Sverker was Sune Sik, the father of Ingrid Ylva, wife of Magnus Minnesköld and father of Birger Jarl Magnusson.[28] If this was the case, it does provide an

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[26] Saxo 14:11, p. 384.

[27] But see below—one of the possible sons had a mother named Ragnhild—she may have been Johan's wife.

[28] Olaus Petri 73, p. 59. In his genealogy (p. 53) Olaus lists Sune as 'Simon', misreading *Simonem* for *Sunonem*. Sune appears elsewhere, for instance in Rasmus

explanation as to why, in the late thirteenth century, the patron's right to Kaga church ('Kangum', between Linköping and Vreta) was shared by her descendant King Valdemar Birgersson as well as those of two other inheritors from the *Sverkerska ätten*, Svantepolk Knudsen, whose first wife was Benedikta, granddaughter of Sverker II, and Johan Filipson (*Aspenäsätten*).[29] Johan's wife was Ingeborg, daughter of Svantepolk Knudsen, but he was also son of Cecilia Knutsdotter, daughter of Sigrid, who was herself daughter of King Knut Eriksson and Cecilia, daughter of Sverker I. The right could have come from the *Sverkerska ätten* by either route. Another of Svantepolk's daughters, Ingrid, donated land in Kaga to Vreta nunnery.[30] There is no verifying source, but Messenius's statement that the church in Kaga was built by Sverker's father 'Cornucha' could therefore be correct.[31]

Karl Sverkersson, probably Sverker the Elder's second son, was king from c. 1160 to 1167. Both Saxo and *Knytlinga Saga* record him as marrying Christine, daughter of Stig Tokesen (Hvide), in the 1160s.[32] It was presumably because of this connection that some of Karl's supporters took his son Sverker to Denmark when he was killed on Visingsö. Sverker the Younger apparently remained in Denmark until the death of Knut Eriksson, who had been responsible for Karl's death. There is some dispute over whether Sverker's marriage to Ingegärd, daughter of Jarl Birger Brosa, occurred before or after his marriage to Benedikte Ebbesdatter of the Hvide kingroup. A marriage into the Hvide family while he was in Denmark would not be surprising, since it was probably at their expense that he was able to live as a prince in exile.[33] A son of Sverker's named

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Ludvigsson's notes on Vreta, but only Olaus lists him as Birger Jarl Magnusson's grandfather.

[29] DS 557.

[30] DS 404.

[31] MSI 1, p. 95; 12, p. 90. The name is spelt Cornucha in Book 1 and Kornuca in Book 12 ('Annals'), a possible clue that Messenius was using more than one source.

[32] See Knýtlinga saga 93, p. 256, and Saxo 28, p. 466. Saxo mentions Guttorm as arriving to fetch Valdemar's niece, which corresponds with the evidence of *Knytlinga saga*, since Christine was the daughter of Margrete, Valdemar's sister, and Stig Tokesen Hvide.

[33] Such generous hospitality was common among relatives in the Middle Ages: at the same time at Sverker's sojourn in Denmark Henry II of England enabled Herzog Heinrich of Saxony to live a very comfortable life in England during his exile from Germany after his fall. However, his was a much shorter stay.

Karl was killed fighting for Sverre near Trondheim, probably in 1198.[34] This Karl was married to a daughter of Sverre, Ingebjørg. He must have been in his mid-teens at the very least, and was therefore born before Sverker's union with Ingegärd. However, it is unlikely that Karl was a son of Benedikte, since she had a brother who died in 1256 and a sister who was still living in 1259.[35] In addition, an army was raised by Benedikte's relatives, and led by two of them, to restore Sverker to his throne in 1208. Such an effort indicates that the stakes were high, as they would be if the possible outcome was the restoration of Benedikte to the queenship, and therefore the revival of hopes for a future king of Sweden tied to their family. Sverker's other wife Ingegärd was a daughter of Birger Brosa and Brigida, who were married before Birger enters the records in c. 1174, but clearly after the death of her previous husband, Magnus Henriksen, in 1161. She must have been older than Benedikte by some years, and her marriage was presumably contracted as part of the deal (with Birger) that ensured Sverker's accession to the throne in 1196, whether it occurred before or shortly after. They were certainly married by the time Ingegärd gave birth to a son, Johan, in 1201.[36] Ingegärd died in c. 1207, as she and other members of her family are recorded in a psalter up to that date, after which she disappears from it and no further deaths are recorded.[37] Karl must have been a son of Sverker by a previous union with an unknown wife or mistress.

Johan Sverkersson (d. 1223) was the fourth and last king of the *Sverkerska ätten*. During his lifetime both he and his half-sister Helena (daughter of Sverker and Benedikte) donated more land in Kimstad to Vreta,[38] and after his death Helena, who inherited everything he had, gave away two *gårdar* on Visingsö to Alvastra and land in Gum. There can be no doubt that the heartland of the *Sverkerska ätten* was Östergötland, but Gum was in Kinda *härad*, on the west coast of Vänern. If the above-mentioned Synnerby was the same as the fifteenth-century *gård* in Skanungs *härad*, the *Sverkerska ätten* acquired

[34] Sverris saga 152, p. 159.
[35] See A. Schück 1956, p. 279.
[36] Sverris saga 182, p. 195.
[37] See G. Carlsson 1954 pp. 101–09.
[38] DS 295.

several landholdings in Västergötland, but when and how is uncertain.[39] A tentative suggestion has been made that Karl Sunesson, the jarl of Västergötland during Sverker's reign, might have been related to Sverker, given that Sune was a name often used within the family, but without more evidence this cannot be assumed.[40]

Helena Sverkersdotter's daughter Benedikta married Svantepolk Knudsen. Benedikta's donation of land in Vedbo in Småland indicates that the *Sverkerska ätten* had interests there as well. Her daughter Ingegärd also gave away many *gårdar* in central Östgötaland, quite possibly her inheritance from the *Sverkerska ätten*. However, it is also possible that all these lands donated by Helena or her descendants were acquired through Helena's own marriage to Sune Folkesson, grandson of Birger Brosa. Because of the interrelationship between the families it is often extremely difficult to ascertain from later documents whether lands in Östergötland were inherited from the *Sverkerska ätten* or *Folkungaätten*. After the death of King Johan the male line of Sverker I ceased to exist. The daughter of Johan's sister Helena, Katarina, married the last of the *Erikska ätten*, Erik Eriksson, 'lisping and limping'.

A.1.3. *Problem members of the* Sverkerska ätten—*Johan Sverkersson and his sons*

As noted above, the twelfth-century Johan Sverkersson was probably the eldest son of King Sverker the Elder. Johan died at a *ting* meeting, according to Saxo, an event that must have occurred towards the end of Sverker's reign, in c. 1153. He appears in Saxo's history as both an active defender of Sweden and a violent and immoral character, who kidnapped and misused the wife and daughter of Karl of Halland—the reason, Saxo asserts, for Sven Grade's invasion of Småland in the 1150s.[41] It is also possible that he can be

[39] I have not been able to trace any other medieval *gårdar* named Synnerby, but there is no clear link between Synnerby, Skanungs *härad* and the *Sverkerska ätten*. There is a Sunnerby in the heartland of the *Sverkerska ätten*, north-west Östergötland, but no *gård* is recorded there. This family's part in the foundation of Gudhem, also in Västergötland, is also unclear.

[40] Gallén 1985 p. 60.

[41] Saxo 14:5, pp. 371–72; 14:10, p. 382; 14:11, p. 384.

identified with Jon Jarl, the hero of *Erikskrönikan* who battled with Russians and Ingrians for nine years. In *Erikskrönikan* this is related directly before the destruction of Sigtuna, which occurred in 1187, but events in the chronicle do not always follow chronologically, and here it is arguably their theme (the battles between Swedes and pagans) which links the two. Two other references have been linked to this Jon Jarl, one an entry in the Novgorod Chronicle, which mentions an attack by a Swedish *kniaz* (the word usually used in contemporary Russian sources for 'prince' or ruler) in 1142, the other an inscription on a gravestone in Linköping cathedral. Since the first does not give a name, there are other possibilities for the identity of the Swedish leader, who may not even have been a prince. The Linköping inscription says:

> Hic paganorum terror clipeusque Sveorum
> Intumulate manes membris dux magne Johannes

Most scholars have agreed that this *Johannes dux* was Jon Jarl, as there is no good alternative candidate, but the inscription is difficult to date. Ahnlund and Liljeholm chose to regard this Johannes as Jon Jarl, but not the son of Sverker, the first on the basis of a scribal addition of '1206' to one surviving version of Ericus Olai's chronicle, where he mentions the death of Jon, and the second on the basis of what Liljeholm considered the thirteenth-century style of the inscription, although most scholars accept that it could also be twelfth-century.[42] Without any convincing evidence, Ahnlund argued that the '1206' note must derive from a lost Dominican annal.[43] He then extended this to argue that Jon was Jarl after Birger Brosa's death, without addressing the possibility that Sverker II gave the *jarladöme* to his one-year old son (in effect, to himself), the most common Swedish interpretation of the final chapter of *Sverris saga*.[44] Further, he suggested that the usurper king Knut Långe (1231–35) was very

[42] Liljeholm also believed that the inscription said *pacatorum* and not *paganorum*, though why this should rule out Sverker's son as the man in question is by no means clear.

[43] Ahnlund 1965, p. 38.

[44] It should be noted, however, that the ms of Cod. AM 327 4° of *Sverris saga* states that Sverker II designated his one-year old son as king (in other words, his successor): see Sverris saga 182, p. 195: . . . *þa toku Suíar til konungs Jon son Sorqvis konungs var hann þa vetr-gamall. Hofdu þa Suíar konung broklausann.*

likely Jon's son on the basis of the B17 king list, which calls him Knut Johansson. Leaving aside the dubious evidence for this hypothesis, the origin of Liljeholm's and Ahnlund's doubts as to Jon's identification with Johan Sverkersson is clearly that (in their eyes) the warrior of *Erikskrönikan* who campaigned against the enemies of Sweden could not possibly be Saxo's unscrupulous and violent kidnapper and rapist who died at the hands of a rabble.[45] Unfortunately this is entirely possible, as many energetic military leaders have been unpleasant and otherwise unsuccessful people. On the other hand, as observed by Stade, Saxo's account may be exaggerated, particularly if intended to show the Danish attack on Sweden, which occurred shortly before Johan's death, in a good light.[46]

The *Erikskrönikan* account, if not entirely mythical, was almost certainly written long after the events described and contains clear conventional elements which might derive from a *folkvisa* (ballad) or the like, for instance, the nine-year battle and the seizing of a weapon by Jon's wife to take revenge, and there are many other cases of warriors being ascribed more heroic deaths than they actually suffered.[47] The Sverker family never had a strong hold in the Mälar region, and the regional nature of loyalties in twelfth-century Sweden, not to mention the fickle nature of the common folk, make it very likely that Saxo's account of Johan Sverkersson's fate was basically correct, even if (typically, in his references to Swedes) he chose to emphasise the bad side of the Swedish prince's life prior to this. Generally the *Erikskrönikan* author seems to have avoided obviously mythical elements in his poem, and an identification of his Jon Jarl, even if a distorted memory, with the Johan of the Linköping gravestone and the son of Sverker I is more plausible than inventing a Jon Jarl of the early thirteenth century.

A possible son of Johan was Kol, recorded as having been a king in several king lists, who rebelled against Karl's successor, Knut Eriksson,

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[45] Ahnlund was not alone in this: Liljeholm invented an even more ludicrous scheme, in which Jon was Jarl of Finland and later bishop of Linköping after Kol's death in 1196, transposing the career of Birger Jarl's son Bengt back to a time before Sweden controlled Finland. Johannes bishop of Linköping certainly died naturally.

[46] Stade 1939 p. 124. Even Stade is, however, unwilling to accept the possibility that Johan was indeed an abductor or may have been unpopular.

[47] An obvious example is Roland of the celebrated *Chanson de Roland* (1090), who is betrayed and dies in a last stand against hordes of Saracens, rather than at the hands of Basque shepherds.

and was killed as a result. The king lists include not only the *Västgötalagen* king list, which lists both him and Burislev as pretenders to the throne opposed to Knut Eriksson, but several shorter lists from Östergötland. His name appears in two lists of donors to Vreta, alongside Burislev and the jarl Guttorm. Unfortunately the scribe of one of these lists has failed to distinguish the name Kol from Karl, making him hard to distinguish from Karl Sverkersson. However, Rasmus Ludvigsson does distinguish them in his notes on Vreta convent's earliest donators. From this we know that Kol owned land in Frönäs on Öland, land that was inherited by his mother Ragnhild, who then donated it to Vreta when she entered the convent. Rasmus records Kol as Johan Sverkersson's ('Hanses') son, whereas the B17 king list of 1344 states that he was Johan's brother, and one Boleslav his son. Rasmus also mentions an exchange of land between Ingegärd Sverkersdotter and Burislev son of Hanse, who would therefore have been Kol's brother.[48] More reliable is the listing of a Burislev as son of Sverker in King Valdemar's *jordebog*, but there is no reason why there should not have been another Burislev named after this one. Ahnlund, for instance, concluded that Ragnhild may well have been Johan's wife, and Kol and the Burislev of the king list his and therefore Karl Sverkersson's (and the *jordebog* Burislev's) nephews.[49] If Burislev was the same as Sverker's son, Kol may also have been a son of his, but no relationship between Sverker and any Ragnhild is known of.

A 'Kol of Sko' appears among witnesses in a record of Archbishop Stefan's settlement of a dispute between a lady Doter and her son Gere, who wished to inherit lands left by her (at Viby) to the monks of Alvastra.[50] This occurred between the years 1164 and 1167. Alongside three deans are listed the secular landowners King Karl, Jarl Ulf and Kol of Sko, Björn of Ström and Peter of Östergötland.[51]

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[48] Listed by Rasmus confusingly as *hennes (Ingegärd's) broders son Burislev hertug Hanses son.*

[49] Ahnlund 1948 pp. 317–20.

[50] DS 51.

[51] Listed as *Wlf comes, Coli de Sco, Biorn de Streme, Petrus (quoque) de occidentali Gocia.* The last may be the same as the *Petrus Trogill* who witnessed the exchange of land between Knut Eriksson and Viby alongside Birger Brosa, Archbishop Stefan and Joarus Edvardi several years later, c. 1170 (DS 64). Björn's Ström is probably the same (*Strom*) listed in an 1170 letter from Alexander III to Knut Eriksson, together with *Fornestinue* (Forn-Sigtuna, now Signildsberg) and *Guazbro* (Vadsbro?) as *villae*

If Kol of Sko was the rebel, this would provide an explanation of why a member of the *Erikska ätten*, Knut Holmgersson, was in possession of the same land seventy years later; his ancestors might have acquired it through confiscation. Kol of Sko is also one of the witnesses in Knut Eriksson's exchange of land with Viby, some years later; so, if he is Kol Johansson, his fight against Knut cannot have begun immediately after Karl Sverkersson's death in 1167. However, a Kol of Sko also appears in an (undated) witness list alongside *Dux* Birger Brosa, suggesting that if this Kol was a rebel, he did not stand alongside Guttorm before his exile.[52] After Kol's death land in 'Lundby vid Fors', probably Lundby near Fors church, near Eskilstuna in Södermanland, was also donated by an unnamed person for his soul.[53] Birger Brosa later acquired the patron's right to this church, and it is possible that his landholdings here were also acquired through confiscations from rebels. In view of the uncertainties, the question of Kol's position in the *Sverkerska ätten* and his identification as Kol of Sko must remain open.

The jarl Ulf (Ulf *comes*) mentioned above was a possible brother of Kol (and therefore Burislev). He may be identified with the 'Ulps dux Galla' of the *Incerti scriptoris chronicon*, which says he was brother of Kol and Cecilia, in which case he was probably a son of either Johan or of the same mother as them (Ragnhild?), and was related to both Karl Sverkersson and Knut Eriksson, as was Kol. *Galla* is assumed to be a misreading of *gamla*, by which appellative he was distinguished from the later jarl Ulf Fase in several annals.[54] If Cecilia was Knut Eriksson's queen (see below), Kol and Ulf were related to both the kings Karl Sverkersson and Knut Eriksson. Ulf Jarl *gamla* can be identified with the 'Vulffus dux' who appears among other early donors to Vårfruberga (Fogdö). It is conceivable that his most important landholdings were around Lake Mälar, since this was where the donations came from. Annerstedt and Gillingstam argued that a 'Botilt comitissa' named in a letter confirming Viby monastery's

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which had formerly belonged to the Uppsala archbishopric but which had returned to private hands (DS 852). By 1175 it belonged to Magnus Birgersson. Adolf Schück speculated that Joarus Edvardi was a brother of Erik Jedvardsson: see A. Schück 1951 pp. 199, 201–02.

[52] DS 64.

[53] DS 839.

[54] SRS 1:1, p. 83; DS 51.

ownership of lands issued by Knut Eriksson (date c. 1165–87) was Ulf's wife.[55] His daughter Ingeborg was named alongside Botild in Knut Eriksson's confirmation letter as a donator to Viby, also of lands on the Mälar coastline. Ahnlund also made a tentative suggestion that Ulf might be identical to Ubbe ('the Strong'), listed as a son of Johan by Olaus Petri.[56] He appears in no other source, but if Olaus is correct Ubbe may also have been yet another son of Johan Sverkersson.

A.1.4. *The* Erikska ätten

The rivals to the *Sverkerska ätten* for the Swedish throne were also powerful landowners, and likewise derived their claim to the kingship through marriage into the *Stenkilätten*. King Erik, later to become a royal saint, married a Christine who was descended from Stenkil. According to *Knytlinga saga* Erik's queen Christine was daughter of Katarina, one of the daughters of Inge the Elder, son of Stenkil.[57] The Swedish king list of B 17 says that Christine was daughter of Inge the Younger, son of Hallsten, brother of Inge the Elder and son of Stenkil. Christine apparently owned land in Västergötland, since she was a relative of the Sigrid who donated land for the foundation of the original Varnhem, and who subsequently incurred divine punishment by trying to drive the monks away again at the behest of a local noble (Erik?)—or so the Danish *Narratiuncula de Fundatione Monasterii Vitæ scholæ in Cimbria* tells us.[58] Beckman believed that the land was most probably a bequest which was not respected by its legal inheritors, perhaps derived from the morning gift for Ulfhild's first marriage, since the *Narratiuncula* says she was Varnhem's founder. However, the removal of the original community was probably tied up with the rivalry between Erik and Sverker's family. According to later tradition Inge the Elder's body lay in Varnhem

[55] DS 63. Fogdö was a daughter-house of Viby-Julita. See Gillingstam 1975 pp. 709–10.

[56] Olaus Petri p. 53. Ahnlund mentions that Ubbe was a familiar version of the name Ulf/Ulv, as in the case of Sven Estridsen's son Ulv (Knytlinga saga 23) and an 'Vlfr' in *Necrologium Lundense*. See Ahnlund 1945 pp. 344–45.

[57] Knytlinga saga 82, pp. 239–40.

[58] B 17 king list, and SMHD 2, pp. 138–142.

monastery, although there is no evidence for this in the church. Perhaps his descendant Christine owned land there.

The eldest son of Erik and Christine, Knut, is known to have married a woman of high status, since there is a reference to this in a letter from Pope Alexander III. Kjellberg, Ahnlund and Adolf Schück, among others, all concluded that she was Cecilia, daughter of Sverker I, or possibly of his son Johan.[59] Several documents of the late twelfth century refer to a 'Knut, brother of the queen', and also a Knut Ulfhildsson. If they are the same person, this Knut would be a half-brother to Cecilia, Erik Eriksson's queen, and a son of Ulfhild, Sverker's queen. The betrothal of Knut Eriksson to the girl (*juuencula*) who was to become his wife occurred during the reign of Erik Jedvardsson. Since Ulfhild probably married Sverker after Magnus Nielsen's death in 1134 the girl was most likely their daughter, but it is not impossible that Johan had a daughter before his death. If Erik wished to strengthen the right of his descendants to succeed to the throne such a marriage would certainly have made sense. It is possible that Knut Eriksson's granddaughter (daughter of Knut Jarl) was also called Cecilia after her grandmother.

However, the Knut who was the queen's brother has also been tentatively identified as Knut, son of Ingeborg, daughter of Sigvard. All three are listed as donors to Vårfruberga nunnery. The name Sigvard is likely to be of Norwegian origin, but the land he donated to Vårfruberga was in Fogdö and Helgarö *socknar*, Södermanland, perhaps originally acquired through marriage.[60] The only other person with this name in contemporary Swedish sources is a Siwardus, bishop of Uppsala, possibly a relative, who was driven from Svealand and went to Oldenburg.[61] Ståhle speculated that the pair of names Sigvard and Ingeborg could have derived from the *Stenkilätt*, since King Filip's wife was Ingegärd, whose grandfather was Sigurd.[62] Furthermore, the name Ingeborg occurs again in the *Erikska ätten*, given to the daughter of Erik Knutsson who married Birger Jarl, and it is argued that she may have been named Ingeborg after Ingeborg Sigvardsdotter. Since Knut Eriksson mentioned in a letter

[59] Kjellberg 1923a p. 357; Ahnlund 1945 pp. 307–09; A. Schück 1951 p. 200.
[60] See Ståhle 1948 p. 113.
[61] Ahnlund 1945 p. 318.
[62] Ståhle 1948 p. 124, n. 31.

to the Pope that his bride was the only one of sufficiently high status to marry him, she may have been an unnamed descendant of Stenkil, but in order for this to be the case all the above assumptions, based entirely on similarity in names, have to be accepted. Knut was a very common name. Cecilia, known to be of high birth, seems a more likely candidate for the queen.

The sons of Christine and Erik Jedvardsson, Knut and Filip, made gifts of land to Gudhem, confirmed by Pope Alexander III in 1177. Knut died nearby, in the same region, at Eriksberg in Gäsene *härad*. There a Romanesque church had been built, traditionally on Knut's orders. Whether the place-name was connected to his father is unclear. His sons were probably resident in Västergötland, since it was there (at or after the battle of Älgerås) that they were killed by Sverker II in 1205. Erik also had daughters who inherited land in Västergötland. Margareta married King Sverre of Norway.[63] In *Inge Bårdssons saga*, known only from a later translated version, she owned large estates in Värmland and Västergötland. She seems to have visited the same regions frequently, eventually fleeing Norway in 1204 because of rumours that she had poisoned her husband's successor, Håkon, son by an earlier marriage. Her daughter Christine married Filip, who inherited her property, but we know neither its details nor what became of it, as their daughter too died before her father.

Another daughter of St Erik, Katarina, married Nils Blaka, who was possibly a son of one of Harald Gille's sons.[64] His (their?) daughter was called Christine, probably after her grandmother, and she became the wife of Håkon Galen, jarl of Norway following the death of King Håkon in 1204.[65] Christine was therefore a cousin of Erik, eldest son of Knut Eriksson, who fled to Norway temporarily in the winter of 1204–05 (probably the same time that Håkon Jarl married Christine).[66] After Håkon Jarl's death Christine married Eskil son of Magnus Minneskold (*Folkungaätten*), who may have achieved his

[63] Sverris saga 100, p. 107.
[64] Kjellberg 1923a p. 354.
[65] King Håkon's successor, Guttorm, grandson of Sverre, was obviously a minor, but he died soon after becoming king, also in 1204. Håkon Jarl was son of Folkvid (*lagman* in Värmland) and Cecilia Sigurdsdotter, daughter of Sigurd Munn, son of Harald Gille. Cecilia left Folkvid and fled to Norway, where she married Bård Guttormson after 'proving' that she had never been married to Folkvid! Their son Inge became king of Norway after the death of Guttorm.
[66] N. Beckman 1912 p. 16, and Kjellberg 1923a p. 354.

standing in Västergötland and become *lagman* there as a result, although we know nothing of where Christine Nilsdotter's lands may have been. Erik Knutsson's sister Sigrid was married to Knut Jarl, son of Birger Brosa, so he too may have acquired land in Västergötland, but there is no record of whether Sigrid died before or after Knut, or of any inheritance. The *Folkungaätten* later owned large estates in Västergötland, which appear in the testament of Magnus Ladulås (1285).[67] In all likelihood most of these were inherited from Ingeborg, sister to King Erik Eriksson and direct descendant of Erik Jedvardsson, who was married to Magnus's father Birger Jarl (half-brother or possibly brother to Eskil *lagman*—see below). The largest part of these lands was in Kinds *härad*.

The troops with which Erik Knutsson fought the battles of 1208 and 1210 were named as *västgötar* in Danish annals, but this does not necessarily mean that they were from his lands, although they were presumably loyal enough to fight for him. Västergötland, where the battles were fought, is the most obvious route for an invading Danish army to advance into Sweden, and was therefore the location of many battles between Swedish and Danish armies, whether or not the Swedish king had lands in the region. During his reign Erik Knutsson donated land around Kråksviken to a certain servant Brynolf and an area just to the south to Alvastra monastery. The implication is that Erik owned large tracts of land on the shores of Lake Vättern. In the south of this region was also the *gård* Spånhult, which Erik Eriksson, his son, donated to Gudhem.

The *Erikska ätten* also held lands in Uppland, although these are not always easy to distinguish from crown lands. Knut Eriksson made donations of two *gårdar*, Säby in Juleta and Rothma, to Julita nunnery, but both were arguably *kungsgårdar*.[68] On the other hand another *gård* in Englev is recorded as having been inherited from his family.[69] In the next century Erik Eriksson donated land in Myreby (probably Mörby, south of Lake Boren) and Scnötlinge (Skillinge?), both in Östergötland, to Julita. St Erik had a younger son, Filip, who is referred to in documents as *frater meus* by Knut Eriksson and *frater regus Kanuti* by Sverker II.[70] Filip probably derived his name from

[67] DS 802.
[68] DS 67 and 68: see N. Beckman 1912 p. 17.
[69] DS 67: . . . *ex paterna successione provenit.*
[70] DS 70 and DS 116.

the earlier King Filip, cousin to his grandmother Katarina, daughter of Inge the Elder. He married a certain Margareta of unknown lineage. Another letter of Knut Eriksson refers to Filip's son Holmger.[71] Some have nevertheless maintained that this Holmger was a son of a daughter of St Erik, rather than son of Filip. With such meagre sources neither case can be proved, but either way he was descended from the king and royal saint.

Holmger's son was Knut, probably the same as the Knut Långe who seized Erik Eriksson's throne in 1229.[72] One clue to this is that he named his son Holmger. Who Holmger's mother might have been is a mystery: most believe that a certain Helena (also of disputed origin, but possibly the daughter of the Danish magnate Peder Strangesen) was a wife to Knut Långe, but not everyone agrees.[73] A Knut appears in several documents as a relative to King Erik Eriksson, probably Knut Holmgersson, but this does not help with his possible identification as Knut Långe. That the two were one and the same has been accepted by many scholars, but not all.[74] The B17 king list gives Knut Långe the additional name Johansson, and has led some to conclude that his name was Knut Johansson, but the list was compiled in the fourteenth century and contains other known errors.[75] On the basis of this Ahnlund argued unconvincingly that Knut Långe might have been the son of Jon Jarl.[76] It is very probable that those seeking to replace Erik Eriksson would choose an alternative candidate with a legitimate claim to the kingship through his ancestry, which would require descent from a former king, through either male or female lines.

By the time of Knut Holmgersson, Filip Eriksson's branch of the *Erikska ätten* seems to have been resident in Uppland. Knut Långe's family owned land around Sko, as land was donated by him for the foundation of the friary.[77] His son Holmger was buried in the nunnery, as it had become by then, after his execution in c. 1248. Other Uppland families which had links with Sko and Sigtuna Dominican

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[71] DS 113, *nepos* (nephew).
[72] See, for instance, Gillingstam 1977b pp. 387–89.
[73] For instance, Gillingstam 1977b p. 388. See Hákonar saga 262, p. 148.
[74] For instance, A. Schück 1953b pp. 37–40.
[75] The list is cited by Ahnlund 1928 p. 62, and Pipping 1950 pp. 36–38, among others. However, Pipping points out that it is not entirely reliable.
[76] Ahnlund 1965 pp. 41–42.
[77] Hákonar saga 165, p. 84.

friary may also have had kinship with either or both *Erikska ätten* and *Folkungaätten*. Unfortunately evidence for landholding in this region only becomes plentiful after c. 1270, and it is impossible to know what changes occurred in the aftermath of the rebellions of 1247–8 and 1251.

The 1251 entry of *Annales 1208–1288* states that Filip and Knut, sons of Katarina, daughter of Erik Knutsson, were executed, presumably as a result of the rebellion.[78] This information does not appear in earlier annals and several scholars chose to read *filii* as an error for *filius*, so that Filip could be Filip Knutsson, son of Knut Långe. The annals say Knut came from the *Erikska ätten* on his mother's side, but if this is the same rebel as Knut Magnusson, *Hákonar saga* names him as son of Sigrid and Magnus Broka.[79] The saga also says that Magnus Broka was the grandson of Knut Eriksson, whereas other sources say that he was married to the same Knut's daughter, or to Erik Knutsson's daughter. It is not impossible that the annal entry is correct, and that Erik Knutsson had a daughter Katarina, legitimate or illegitimate, but her sons would have been quite young in 1251. With different information in different sources the identity of the rebels and their relationship to former kings or jarls cannot be certain, and the names of others who took part on both sides may remain entirely unknown.

A.1.5. *The* Folkungaätten

The first Jarl Birger, Birger Brosa (*den leende*, 'the smiling'), and his brothers Magnus and Karl are likely to have been the sons of Bengt Snivel.[80] According to Birger's contemporary Saxo, Bengt Snivel and his brother Knut were the sons of Folke and Ingegerd.[81] Ingegerd was one of the three recorded children of the Danish king (later

[78] ASMÆ, *Annales 1208–1288* p. 260. *Decollati sunt Philippus et Kanutus filii domine Katerine filie regis Ericus secundi.*

[79] Hákonar saga 165, p. 84.

[80] Gillingstam 1965 pp. 260–65, p. 260, and S. Carlsson 1953, p. 2. Both combine the two genealogical traditions discussed below. See Olaus Petri p. 56. The identity of Birger's mother is uncertain. Saxo does not seem entirely certain that Bengt Snivel was Birger's father either! See Gallén 1985 p. 59.

[81] Saxo 11:14, p. 86. Folke is *gentilis nobilis* in Saxo's history, but known as Folke *grossus* ('the fat') in later Swedish annals.

saint) Knud, killed by rebellious peasants in Odense church in 1086. Knud had married Adela of Flanders, who could trace her descent by at least three lines to Charlemagne. Ingegerd and her sister Cecilie both went to Sweden after Adela's death, where Cecilie married the *Gothorum prefectus*, Erik, and Ingegerd married Folke.[82] Knowledge of the Saxo genealogy is apparent in several Danish-Swedish monastic annals, the earliest Swedish ones being the *Annales 826–1415*.[83] These do not go back further than Folke (*Fulchoni*), and confuse the two jarls Birger, stating that Birger, called 'Ierll', and son of Magnus Minnesköld, was the father of Magnus Ladulås. Earlier Swedish (mainland) annalists are more likely to have known that there were two Birgers in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. In *Chronica Visbycensis*, also fifteenth-century but later than *826–1415*, the same mix-up results in a number of other dating errors. The notice for 1202 names *Birgerus primus dux*, as in the earlier chronicles, but the monk then confuses the two in his genealogy, naming the same as father to Valdemar and Magnus Ladulås. This ultimately derives from problems arising in Saxo's genealogy and Abbot Vilhelm's Danish royal genealogy.[84] Here Birger Magnusson is said to have died in 1202. The Visby monk solved the problem of two death dates for Birger in the *Annales 266–1430* by combining them.[85] This has led to the misplacing of events from 1248 to 1266.[86] Another source, *Annales 916–1430*, may derive its chronological confusion from *Chronica Visbycensis*, although there are other differences between the two. The original *Annales 916–1430* was probably fourteenth-century, but the

[82] Erik is probably the same who was later jarl of Falster in Denmark from 1131 to 1145. Robert of Ely says *Ericus Falster* was involved in Knud's murder, and in Saxo's history Knud meets Erik *Falstriae praefecturae viro* beforehand. An Ericus *dux* was present with his sons Karolus and Kanutus when Lund cathedral was consecrated in 1145. *Gothorum prefectus*, jarl of the *götar*, probably means jarl of Västergötland: one such called Erik fled to Denmark in the 1130s. In 1137 the jarl in Västergötland was Karl Sunesson, conceivably related to the *Sverkerkasätten*, which used the name Sune. See Gallén 1985 pp. 59–60.

[83] See DMA p. 302. The manuscript survives as a transcript in Stephanus's ms. Uppsala De La Gardie XXV–XXIX, but an older one, *Varie documenta antinquitatem Danicarum* is known to have existed, and excerpts survive in Uppsala H112. It was probably begun in Skåne and transferred to Ostergotland in c. 1300, deriving material from the Danish Lund and Ryd annals. The annal is also in ASMÆ pp. 375–387.

[84] See ASMÆ, commentary on chapter 7, note 28.

[85] ASMÆ, *Chronica Visbycensis* p. 315. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Swedish annals do not confuse the two Birgers.

[86] ASMÆ, commentary on *Visbykrönikan 815–1444*, chapter 9.1, p. 131.

annals have been amended by a later scribe. In the extant version of the annals there are two Jarls Birger, but the chronological problem has been 'solved' by stating that the younger Birger inherited the jarldom when the elder died in 1202 (46 years early), and adjusting other dates to conform with this, many events being misdated by as much as a century as a result.[87]

Ericus Olai states that the first Birger Jarl died in 1202, but his main source seems to have been the *Saxokompendiet*, and he confused the jarls Birger in a different way. The line of Ingegerd Knudsdatter and Folke leads to Magnus Minnesköld, but not to a Jarl Birger. Therefore he does not miss out a generation and avoids displacing any events. Birger Jarl Magnusson enters the picture because he married Erik Knutsson's sister Ingeborg, Ericus emphasising that the line of Magnus Eriksson went back to St Erik through his grandfather Magnus, son of Ingeborg.[88]

The genealogy of Varnhem monastery seems to represent a second tradition, which was used by Olaus Petri and Johannes Messenius. In this there is no record of descent from Cecilie. Cecilie became a common name among the nobility of Denmark after St Knud's daughter. These chroniclers claimed that Folke was the son of Ingevald, son of Folke Filbyter, but this lineage is suspect. Folke's name Filbyter was probably derived from his father's name, Fylippi or the like, but this may alternatively have been a brother's name. Folke Filbyter might have been a contemporary of the Swedish king Filip, who presumably derived his name from a French ancestor. The name Filip recurs subsequently in all three of the kin-groups discussed here. Because of the practice of naming children after their forbears (frequently, but not exclusively, maternal or paternal grandfathers), names regularly recur within families, as do the names Birger and Magnus within the *Folkungaätten*.[89] The sons of Folke Digre were named Knut

[87] ASMÆ, *Annales 916–1430* p. 294, and commentary in chapter 7, pp. 86–89 and p. 91.

[88] EOC 1:13, p. 63. See also 2, *Prologomena und Indizes*, notes on sources of chapter 13 on p. 43. See also SSH 2, *Saga Inga Konungs og bræðra hans* 22, p. 785. According to this Birger Brosa's wife was previously married to King Inge and then Karl Sonasson, jarl of Västergötland. Sverker had a son called Sune Sik.

[89] This is often used as a clue when tracking medieval genealogies, but it is a dangerous method without corroborating evidence. It is worth remembering that Ericus Olai and his predecessors may have used this method themselves when constructing their genealogies, without the same care as most modem researchers.

and Bengt, the names of the father and uncle of Ingegerd, the martyred Danish king and his brother who fell with him.[90]

Birger Brosa's brother Magnus Bengtsson, called Minnesköld, probably owes his name to the father of St Knud, Sven Estridsen, who also called himself Magnus. The father of Birger Jarl, Magnus is associated with the Bjälbo estate in the *Västgötalagen lagman* list.[91] This region of Östergötland was clearly among the most important of the *Folkungaätten* landholdings, and Birger Brosa may also have held land near Bjälbo.[92] The relationship between Magnus Minnesköld's sons, and even their number, has presented a problem for researchers.[93] Eskil became *lagman* of Västergötland (1217–25) and Karl and Bengt successive bishops of Linköping. Since Eskil appears in written sources in the early 1190s, he may have been considerably older than them.[94] All three were quite clearly older than Birger and probably sons by an earlier marriage or marriages, since they held their positions in the 1220s and 1230s, long before Birger Magnusson became jarl in 1248. Bengt was probably named after his grandfather, and Karl after his uncle, brother of Magnus Minnesköld and Birger Brosa, and successor to the latter as *dux sveorum*. How the name Eskil came into the family is more of a mystery, but if Jarl Gallén is correct in hypothesising that Magnus's first wife was granddaughter of Archbishop Eskil, it may derive from there.[95] Birger Jarl is known to have been son of Ingrid Ylva, according to Olaus Petri daughter to Sune Sik, son of Sverker the Elder.[96] A further mystery is the origin of Birger's other (known) half-brother Elof.[97] Gillingstam suggested that he was son of Ingrid Ylva by a later marriage than that to Magnus Minnesköld, but it is possible that he was illegitimate, or even a son of Magnus

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[90] Olaus Petri p. 56. See Gallén 1985 p. 59 and Gillingstam 1965 p. 260.

[91] VgL 1, 5.

[92] A. Schück 1951, p. 212.

[93] There is also a theory that Magnus had a daughter who married Sigtrygg Bengtsson (Boberg), mentioned in 1219. Sigtrygg had a son named Karl, mentioned for the last time in 1252.

[94] DS 67. This is a witness list, and there is no known alternative Eskil.

[95] Gallén 1985, pp. 62–63. The lady in question was a daughter of Eskil's daughter and Karl, Jarl of Halland, son of the Erik, *dux* of Götaland mentioned in n. 69 above.

[96] Rosén 1960. Eskil was married to Kristine (d. 1254), widow of Norwegian jarl Håkon Galen (d. 1214) and granddaughter of St Erik, but their possible descendants are uncertain.

[97] See Gallén 1957a p. 27.

by an unknown marriage.[98] However, the arms of his descendants bore no relation to the Folkung lion, so this seems unlikely.[99]

According to *Heimskringla* Bengt Snivel's son Birger Brosa had four sons, Filip Jarl, Knut Jarl, Folke and Magnus. Because Folke was not named jarl and does not appear as a son in other sources, Bolin concluded that this was a mistake, and that the Folke Jarl who fell at Gestilren (1210) was not Birger's son, but Tunberg pointed out that Folke Jarl appears in a list of relatives to Knut Jarl (naming Folke, Eskil and his brothers), called upon to witness his donation to Riseberga nunnery when he died.[100] A fragment of an obituary notice in the British Museum says that Knut died on 31 January, presumably that date in 1208 (according to Danish annals), when the battle of Lena was fought. Knut was Erik Knutsson's jarl, and Folke must have succeeded him, only to die at Gestilren two years later. He in turn was succeeded by Karl Döve, his uncle. A further indication of Folke's relationship to Birger Jarl Brosa is simply the list of jarls: Birger, Knut, Folke, Karl Döve, Ulf Fase, Birger Magnusson. It is unlikely that Folke would be the only one outside the *Folkungaätten*. As Carlsson observed, there was good reason why Filip Birgersson, who was jarl in Norway, and Knut Jarl, whose son Magnus Broka was later a friend of King Håkon, should be better known in the sources, which are mostly Icelandic-Norwegian.[101]

A.1.6. *The* folkungar—*rebels of the* Folkungaätten*?*

The branch of the *Folkungaätten* that was directly descended from Birger Brosa provides a possible explanation of the name 'folkungar', applied to the rebels of 1210, 1248, 1251 and 1278–80. The argument that the rebels constituted a kin-group alliance was first clearly expressed by Bolin, but later expanded by Sten Carlsson. He

[98] Gillingstam 1965 pp. 261–62. See also Mattsson 1998 p. 107: she claims that the requirement of dispensation for the marriage of Rörik Birgersson to Helga Anundsdotter in 1289 makes it likely that the first traced his ancestry to Birger Brosa and the second to Magnus. Helga was daughter of Ingeborg, daughter of Elof. This is possible, but there may be other explanations for the dispensation.

[99] Raneke 2001 p. 852.

[100] See Bolin 1934 p. 234, and for the identification of Folke as Birger's son, Tunberg 1951, and S. Carlsson 1953 p. 80.

[101] S. Carlsson 1953 pp. 81–82.

attempted to show that all the *folkungar* of the thirteenth-century rebellions could have been related to Folke Jarl, in which case the name had genealogical as well as possible political implications. Carlsson drew attention to the name Holmger, the name of Knut Långe's son, but also of one of Folke Jarl's sons. The sources certainly associate Holmger Knutsson with the *folkungar*, but only *Hákonar saga* explicitly names him as one of them. However, Carlsson argued that a marriage of Folke to the widow of Holmger Filipsson would provide both an explanation for the name of his son and a family link between Holmger and Filip Larsson, his ally in 1248.[102] The theory is conjectural but possible, since a family link was the norm when cementing a friendship or alliance, but Holmger had another link to Filip through marriage (see below). A marriage between Folke and Holmger Filipsson's widow would not, of course, rule out another (conjectural) marriage which the eighteenth-century scholar Peringskjöld posited for him, to Ulfhild daughter of Sune Sik, providing an explanation for the name of his other son, Sune.[103] One of those named as a rebel of 1251 is Knut Magnusson, son of Magnus Broka, son of Knut Jarl, who was also descended from King Knut Eriksson on his mother's side (see above).[104] There is no known connection between him and Folke Jarl other than through his grandfather, Folke's brother, but he is not specifically named as one of the *folkungar* either.

According to *Hákonar saga* the ally of Holmger Knutsson in 1248, Filip Larsson, was son of Lars, son of a daughter to Filip Jarl. The saga also states that Filip Larsson was married to Helene, widow of Knut Långe and mother of Holmger, and that Helene was daughter of a Danish noble, Peter Strangesen.[105] Håkon was not only related to Filip Larsson, since Brigida, Birger Brosa's wife, was his grandmother, but Filip fled to Norway after the failed rebellion. Nevertheless, several scholars have refused to accept this genealogy, arguing that Holmger was not stepson to Filip. Much of the confusion derives from a letter in which Magnus Ladulås donated land confiscated from a certain Helena to Sko convent.[106] This Helena's

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[102] S. Carlsson 1953 p. 85.
[103] Johan Fredrich Peringskiöld, 'Ättartal för Swea och Götha konunga hus, efter trowärdiga historier och documenter . . .', 1725, mentioned in Carlsson 1953 p. 106.
[104] Hákonar saga 270, pp. 152–53.
[105] Hákonar saga 262, p. 148.
[106] DS 753.

husband was a certain Holmger, who had plotted against the king alongside her father, Filip. An undated letter confirms that a 'Helena of Sko' was married to Holmger, who was identified by several scholars with Holmger Knutsson.[107] The letter of King Magnus referred to 1248, not 1278. Kjellberg also suggested that the Filip in question was Filip Petersson, one of the rebels of 1251. Other scholars have argued that he was Filip Finvidsson, Hjärne pointing out that a Helena of Sko was mentioned as a sister of Filip Finvidsson's daughter in 1326 and 1328. Liljeholm was right in drawing attention to the problem of the date of this source, almost fifty years after the rebellion, and to the fact that no child of Filip Finvidsson is known of before 1290, but concluded that Holmger was not Filip Larsson's stepson, because his name appears before Filip's in the 1282 letter. Instead he suggested that he might have been married to Filip's step-daughter, called Helena like her mother. However, as Gillingstam pointed out, if Holmger is the son of a king, in this case Knut Långe, the order of precedence in the letter is correct.[108] The letter could therefore refer to land confiscated after 1248, and *Hákonar saga* may be accepted as reliable on Filip Larsson's relationship to Holmger.

The rebel leaders of 1278–80 are listed in various sources as the brothers Johan and Birger Filipsson, their nephew Johan Karlsson (of Fånö), Filip Finvidsson (of Rumby), Anund Tuverson and the Holmger mentioned above. Anund is completely unknown from any other source. Rörik Birgersson, grandson of one of Folke Jarl's daughters, may possibly have been implicated, as he was connected with the enemies of Magnus Ladulås in the dispensation for his marriage to Helga Anundsdotter in 1289.[109] Rörik is not found in any source between 1276 and 1289.[110] Johan Filipson was married to Ingeborg Svantepolksdotter, who was daughter of Benedikta Sunedotter, granddaughter of Folke Jarl, and Johan Karlsson was married to a niece of the Ängel brothers, sons of Johan, who had married another of

[107] Pipping 1950 pp. 64–67.
[108] Gillingstam 1970 p. 4.
[109] DS 1009. The main evidence for Rörik's relationship with Folke Jarl is that he divided the patron's right to Skrakeby church in Östergötland with Vreta monastery and the two Svantepolksdottrar, and his son was called Folke. See DS 1912, DS 1915 and DS 1917.
[110] In 1276 he is listed in the king's circle (DS 618).

Folke Jarl's daughters. The identity of the father of Johan and Birger Filipsson has caused some discussion, as there are several possible candidates. Among others, three earlier *folkungar* rebels had the name Filip: Filip Larsson, Filip Petersson and Filip Knutsson.[111] Another possible father is Filip Birgersson, who is listed in the *jordebok* of Vårfruberga (then Fogdö), where Birger Filipsson's parents are known to have been buried.[112] Given that all the *folkungar* Filips are named *junker* in Icelandic sources, which implies that they were not married, Filip Birgersson is a better candidate. The mother of the Filipssons was Cecilia Knutsdotter, whose father was a *dux*.[113] Two suggestions have been made for his identity, one Knut Birgersson, the other Knut Kristinasson (Håkon Galen's son), jarl of Norway. The first died in 1208 and the second was married in 1227, making the first more likely, since Cecilia's grandson Johan Karlsson was disinherited in 1274 and his son Folke married in 1299; this is hardly possible if she was born after 1227.[114] Cecilia was therefore daughter to Knut Birgersson, whose sister's and mother's names were echoed in those of their daughters, Ingegärd and Birgitta. This makes the Filipssons grandsons of Knut Jarl and cousins to Knut Magnusson, once again with the possibility that Knut Jarl's descendants might be included among the *folkungar*.

A.1.7. *Birger Brosa, his descendants and their landholdings*

The extent of the landholdings of the *Folkungaätten* in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century must be largely deduced from later documentary evidence of the dealings of descendants. Before the late twelfth century little can be said of them, and even after that it is

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[111] Filip Petersson, named in *Annales 1160–1336*' (ASMÆ p. 269) remains something of a mystery, but Carlsson speculates that he was the same person as the Filip Katrineson of 1224, or more likely son of Peter Larsson and brother to the Östgötaland *lagman* Lars who kidnapped Sune Folkesson's daughter Benedikta from Vreta (DS 229, DS 896, also remembered in a *folkvisa*). See Kjellberg 1923a p. 367, S. Carlsson 1953 p. 93, and Ek 1924 pp. 136–39.

[112] C.I. Ståhle, 'Om vår äldste jordebok', p. 125.

[113] DS 900.

[114] S. Carlsson 1953 p. 91. In addition Cecilia's two great granddaughters Ingegärd Filipsdotter and Kristina Johansdotter were married before 1293, when Kristina died: DS 1095, DS 1096.

difficult to establish how many of the lands in the possession of descendants came to Birger and his sons. Much evidence has disappeared, and nothing is known of what lands may Birger may have acquired from his marriage to Brigida, or the lands of his son Filip Jarl. Even for the period after 1250 much is lacking—one great-grandson, Lars Holmgersson (Holmger was a son of Folke Jarl) is known by name only from a single reference.[115] The earliest extant document known to have originated in Östergötland is a letter dated to 1208 concerning the sale and exchange of goods and lands between Alvastra monastery and several private individuals.[116] A number of churches built in the Bjälbo region during the reign of Knut Eriksson (1167–1202) have been attributed, more or less certainly, to Birger Brosa, including the stone churches of Fivelstad, Stora Åby and Ekeby and the towers of Rök and Orlunda.[117] It has also been suggested that some of the work on the stone church at Heda may have been at Birger's instigation, but much of this is speculation, and is based on an assumption that Birger was the greatest landowner in Östergötland. Other families, among them the *Sverkerska ätten*, must have built churches, and it seems equally likely that Birger's own brother Magnus Minnesköld was responsible for some of this work, although he has been eclipsed in historiography by his more powerful brother. He was almost certainly the builder of the stone church of Bjälbo, which lay in his *gård*. As elsewhere, the stone churches were probably replacements for wooden ones, for which there is some evidence in Bjälbo itself, which may have been constructed on the orders of the ancestors of Birger and Magnus, or other families from whom they acquired their lands before records become plentiful.

Among the properties of Birger Brosa's descendants in Östergötland were some owned by his grandsons Sune and Holmger Folkesson. Sune's and Helena's land in Kimstad has been mentioned above. Östergötland was probably the region in which Sune had his chief residence, since both he and his wife expressed their desire to be buried at Alvastra. So too did the wife of Holmger, Kristina Fastadotter. In the testament of Queen Katarina, his niece, Holmger received Tift in Kärna *socken*.[118] The same *gård* was later in the possession of

[115] DS 893.
[116] DS 134. SLL 1, Inledning, pp. XVII–XVIV.
[117] Kennersterdt 1990 p. 118.
[118] DS 377.

his wife Kristina, and subsequently their son Ulf.[119] Several *gårdar* in central Östergötland were also owned by later descendants of Birger Brosa, the *Aspenäsätten* of the fourteenth century. They owned land between Vadstena and Lake Täkern in Dals *härad*. Jon son of Knut Jonsson owned the *gård* of Älvestad in Strå socken in 1356, and presumably also Nyby (*Nyiabygdh*) in Väversunda *socken* (Lysinga *härad*), since his daughter Katarina gave this as a soul gift for herself, her husband and their children in 1378.[120] To the south of this lay the *gård* Sjötuna (*Twna*), bequeathed by Jon's son Ulf and his wife Gunhild Uddromsdotter to Vadstena in 1391. Among many other possessions, the *Folkungaätten* owned land on the ancient route through Stångdal and along the lakes from Horn to the region around Linköping. Knut Jonsson, one of the *Aspenäsätten*, owned land in Skedevi on the site of the old settlement of Kindas.[121] On this estate lies the church of Tjärstad, which has a defensible round tower. It is one of two in Östergötland, the other being at Birger Brosa's church at Vårdsberg. He may also have built Tjärstad church, although there is no solid evidence for this. Much later Knut Jonsson's great grandson Laurens Ulfsson owned a *gård* in the same *socken*. Knut's grandson Valdemar Eriksson, also grandson of King Valdemar, owned the complex of Kättilstad in the neighbouring *socken* of Kättilstad and also Brokind (*Broo*) in Vårdnäs, which is strategically situated where the land meets the river and lake system.[122] These two *byar* must have been inherited by Valdemar Eriksson either from Birger Brosa via Knut Jonsson and Valdemar's mother Ingeborg, or from Magnus Minnesköld via Birger Jarl, King Valdemar and his son Erik.

Contemporary record exists of Birger Brosa's sale of five *attungar* in Tegneby (*Thiegnæby*, in Rystad *socken* north-east of Linköping) to Ingegärd, abbess of Vreta and daughter of Sverker, but there has been some debate as to whether this land was actually crown land acquired through Birger's *jarladöme*, since the place-name *tegneby* is often associated with one name for a member of the king's military following, *thegn*. Later exchanges of land involving descendants of the *Folkungaätten*, when the same five *attungar* appear to have been acquired

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[119] DS 855 and DS 1600.
[120] DS 4544, RPB 1366. See also Ridderstad 1917 pp. 311–16.
[121] Ridderstad 1918 p. 693.
[122] Ridderstad 1918 pp. 674–78. The bridge spans the sound between the lakes Lilla Rängern and Järnlunden.

by Svantepolk Knudsen, suggest that both nunnery and the family owned other land in the same area, as exchanges and sales were often used by landowners to gather their scattered landholdings into fewer concentrations.[123] Nearby lands were later inherited by Bo Jonsson (Grip), who was grandson of Cecilia, daughter of Knut Jonsson, but whether they came to Bo through Cecilia is not certain.

Rystad church had some link with Birger Brosa's foundation Riseberga nunnery, as land in Ybby (*Egby*) which was said to have belonged to the church for a long time was given to Riseberga by Bengt, brother of King Magnus Ladulås, in 1280.[124] The church was given more convenient land in exchange. It has been suggested that this land was confiscated from the recently disinherited Filipssons, who inherited it from Birger Brosa.[125] The church at Vårdsberg, not far from Tegneby, was a Birger Brosa foundation, and one descendant, the Östergötland *lagman* Magnus Knutsson, sold land at Degeryd in the same *socken* to Linköping cathedral in 1352.[126] One of the Filipssons, Birger, also owned land in Östra Husby (*Husaby inter Wika*), mentioned in a donation letter to Linköping cathedral in 1279.[127] In Knut Jonsson's testament of 1345 he is also mentioned as having owned part of Alguvd in Kaga *socken*.[128] At one stage Birger also owned a *gård* called Hovby in Västra Eneby on the west shore of Åsund, which came to his (Birger Brosa's) branch of the family from Magnus Minnesköld's when he married Magnus's descendant Ulfhild Magnusdotter.[129]

Although Östergötland has traditionally been regarded as the homeland of the *Folkungaätten*, there is good evidence that their landholdings extended well beyond this region even in the time of Birger Brosa. To the north-west is Närke, which had communication routes to both regions of Götaland and water routes navigable by small craft to the Mälar region.[130] Most of the early churches of Närke

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[123] The five *attungar* later exchanged and returned to Svantepolk Knutsson, father-in-law of a Bjälbo descendant, Johan Filipsson, were probably the same land. Later still, in 1321, his daughter Ingrid gave it back to Vreta when she herself entered the nunnery. See DS 2286, 2326 and 2426.

[124] DS 708.

[125] Mattsson 1998 p. 120.

[126] See Koit 1957a p. 12. Magnus was a grandson of Johan Filipson.

[127] DS 646, 668.

[128] See DS 3963, DS 3996 and DS 3997.

[129] DS 671, 672.

[130] The route to Västergötland passed through the Tiveden pass at Ramundeboda,

that can be dated are dated to the late twelfth century, and a surviving wooden one at Tångeråsa to the early thirteenth century.[131] In this period the area was not as heavily populated as regions to the east and lacks some of the evidence for aristocratic activity in the Viking Period that exists there, such as stones commemorating bridge-building. On the other hand, two of the richest finds of Viking Age silver have been uncovered there, at Eketorp in Edsberg *socken*, near Riseberga, and Sandtorp farm in Viby *socken*, further south.[132] It was in this region that Birger Brosa founded Riseberga nunnery, whose properties provide not only the majority of the evidence for his landholdings in the region, but also the only substantial body of evidence for *Folkungaätten* landholdings from Birger's own lifetime.[133] Birger donated eight *attungar* in Riseberga, four in Snarvi (Edsberg *sn*), nine in Fugesta and two in Gillberga, a *gård* called Lotetorpa, the proceeds of a mill and half of the fishery of Alna (at Örebro), six *attungar* in Mossby, two in Runninge and two *attungar* of fisheries in Värmland.[134] This is possibly the same location as the salmon fishery that was later donated in whole to the nunnery.[135] Fisheries in Värmland were also owned by Birger's great grandson, also named Birger. Nowadays Lotetorpa, Ana and Runninge are all within the boundary of Örebro, and the location of Gillberga possibly at the eastern end of Lake Hjälmaren. This represents a considerable outlay, and Riseberga was without doubt the most important monastic

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which was later listed as on the route of the king's *eriksgata* (see ch. 4). This was the route from Västergötland to the Mälar valley. A route also led from Örebro to Tuna in Södermanland via Vingåker.

[131] Edsberg church is regarded as one of the earliest, and is dated to this period: see Collmar 1977 p. 317. For Tångeråsa see Lagerlöf 1985 p. 214.

[132] Ekelund 1956 pp. 143–75.

[133] Mattson 1998 p. 149. The foundation by Birger is not absolutely certain, but the substantial grants of land in DS 823 strongly suggest that this constituted it.

[134] DS 823. See also Grandinson 1935. Fugesta is his interpretation of *Fivelstaht* listed in the document. Fivelstad was near Bjälbo in Östergötland, but is nowhere near the rest of the donated land. Grandinson argued that at some stage Fugesta had been misread as Fivelstad because of the location of the latter, near land known to have belonged to Magnus Minnesköld in the late twelfth century. He also suggested that Gillberga was the village in a parish that also had that name, at the eastern end of Lake Hjälmaren. Several other properties listed as belonging to Riseberga nunnery in a papal letter of 1216 (DS 157) were in the vicinity. Their donors are unknown.

[135] DS 824.

foundation of the *Folkungaätten* before 1250. The buildings were imposing by Swedish standards, particularly the church.[136] As in the case of the Horn route properties, the majority of the sites donated to the nunnery are on an important communication route, the Svartån (Black river) that runs from western Närke to Hjälmaren.

Birger's son Knut Jarl also gave two *gårdar* in Frösvi and Åkerby (Edsberg *sn*) to Riseberga nunnery on his death bed.[137] Further evidence of landholdings in Närke comes from Cecilia Knutsdotter's testament, in which she donated a property of her son Birger's in Flastad to Vårfruberga nunnery, and gave him Husaby in Närke in return (identified by Henrik Shück as Husaby in Glanshammars *socken*).[138] Among the properties of Vårfruberga were several located in Närke along the north shore of Hjälmaren. Ståhle believed that these too were probably donated by Cecilia, who obviously favoured this nunnery and was finally laid to rest there.[139] At least one of the sons of Knut's brother Folke, Holmger, probably also inherited land in Närke, since his wife Kristina left a *curia* in Fällestad (Gällersta *sn*, Sköllersta *hd*) to Alvastra monastery.[140] Her testament lists this land (and the land in Rekarne mentioned below) as hers, but she may have acquired it from her husband, perhaps as a morning-gift.

In nearby Rekarne there is also evidence that the sons of Bengt Snivel may have owned land, although it is impossible to determine precisely when this came into the hands of their descendants. The extent of the landholdings suggests that some at least was inherited from them. Unlike Närke, the region was heavily settled and its churches date to an earlier period, at least as early as 1100.[141] The stone church at Fors was probably preceded by a wooden church. The region is associated with the martyr Eskil, so-called bishop of 'Nordanskog', whose first seat was allegedly at Fors. Birger Brosa was *patronus* of Eskil's church, and donated it and two properties at

[136] See Mattson 1998 pp. 220–32.
[137] Grandinson 1935 p. 4. The letter that mentions these donations was written by Bishop Olof of Strängnäs, but is undated. Knut died on 31 January, according to a an obituary preserved in the British Library—the day of the battle of Lena. However, he may have died of wounds after the battle was over.
[138] DS 900.
[139] Ståhle 1948 p. 126.
[140] DS 855.
[141] A. Schück 1951 p. 210, Wijkander 1983 p. 107.

Årby and Aby to the Order of St John, which founded an abbey there.[142] Folke Jarl's descendants certainly owned land in this region. In the testament of Kristina Fastadotter a *curia* in Ramshammar (Kjulsta *sn*, Österrekarne *hd*), which she may have acquired from her husband Holmger Folkesson, was left to Alvastra.[143] Their son Ulf obtained this (then called *mansio*) back in return for land in Mem and Folåsa, Östergötland.[144] Folke Jarl's grandchild Queen Katarina (wife of Erik Eriksson) left a *gård* in Lundby to her cousins, the sons of Rorik Birgersson, conceivably the Lundby near Eskilstuna in Rekarne, and another *gård* in Strand in nearby Jäders *socken* to Johan Ängel's sons, also cousins.[145] In the same *socken* was the manor of Idö, which belonged to Birger Filipson, son of Cecilia Knutsdotter, but despite its proximity to other Birger Brosa properties it is possible that he inherited this from his father. Similarly, Katarina's land might have been inherited from the *Sverkerska ätten* through Sverker the Younger's daughter Helena and her daughter. A rival to Knut Eriksson, Kol, also owned land in a *by* Lundby (*Lunda wedh Forss*), from which two *attungar* were donated to Vreta nunnery, and this may have been confiscated after his defeat.[146] Whether some of his land ended up in the hands of Knut's jarl Birger Brosa is a matter for conjecture.

Knut Jarl may also have owned land in Rekarne, as his descendant Birger Filipsson owned the manor at Idö mentioned above, and also a *gård* at Tibble, which he sold to Fogdö nunnery in 1279.[147] The last has been impossible to locate with any certainty, some scholars holding that it is in Södermanland, others in Uppland.[148] Land in Österrekarne was also donated to Alvastra monastery by Kristina Fastedotter in her testament. She was widow to Holmger Folkeson, brother of Sune, so this land may have been inherited from Birger Brosa. The sons of her grandson Ulf Holmgersson, Holmger and Lars, also owned land in Rekarne.

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[142] DS 839. The document is a confirmation letter of Pope Gregory IX, written in 1231. Arby has been identified as a *by* in the region of Tuna. See also DS 1026.
[143] DS 855.
[144] DS 1002.
[145] DS 377 and DS 839. See Schiick 1951 p. 209.
[146] DS 839, Ahnlund 1945 p. 321.
[147] Koit 1957a p. 11, and DS 1026. See Schiick, 'Från Viby till Bjälbo', p. 209.
[148] DS 667.

A.1.8. *Magnus Minnesköld and his descendants*

Although powerful families generally owned scattered properties, most lavished special attention on a specific 'family' estate. In the *Early Västgötalagen* that of Magnus Minnesköld is listed as Bjälbo in western Östergötland. The same manor was the birthplace of Birger Jarl Magnusson, his son. Few other details of Magnus's properties exist from his lifetime, but there is also a record of his gift of a mill in Långofors to Nydala monastery, confirmed by Birger Jarl.[149] To judge by the known properties of his descendants, Magnus undoubtedly owned other properties in Östergötland. Another son of Magnus, Bishop Bengt of Linköping, is known to have owned land there. The branch of the *Folkungaätten* descended from Bengt is known as the 'Folkungaättens lagmansgren', and they too held land in Östergötland that was probably inherited from Bishop Bengt. After 1250 their authority as *lagmän* was of vital importance in upholding the rule of the Folkung dynasty in Östergötland. Magnus Bengtsson was *lagman* in Östergötland by 1247, and *fogde* of Kalmar castle (*prefectus Kalmarniensis*) according to German sources.[150] Although most of his land was probably inherited from his father, he was one of the relatives of *junker* Karl Ulfsson, grandson of Karl Döve, who died before him, and he may have inherited some land from him. Magnus died in 1263, but his son Bengt Magnusson had succeeded him as *lagman* by 1269, when he took his seal.[151] He was also on the king's council by 1288, and probably died in c. 1292, since his son Magnus was *lagman* in 1293.[152] Bengt Magnusson donated several *gårdar* northeast of Linköping and the patron's right to the church at Östra Skrukeby to Linköping cathedral in 1275.[153] The patron's right to this church was shared with two daughters of Svantepolk (possibly also descended from Birger Brosa) and Rörik Birgersson, all of whom confirmed the donation in 1313. If Svantepolk's daughters were borne by Benedikta Sunesdotter and not Svantepolk's later wife, it must have been a possession of the whole *Folkungaätten*.[154] However, it is

[149] DS 843, exact date uncertain.
[150] DS 340, LUb 1:2, p. 126.
[151] DS 538.
[152] DS 975.
[153] DS 592. See also Herman Schück 1959 pp. 198, 407.
[154] S. Carlsson 1957 pp. 39–40, and DS 1912, 1915, 1917 and 1923. See also Gillingstam 1965d p. 185: Benedikta was a granddaughter of Birger Brosa, and

not impossible that the patronage of Östra Skrukeby church derived from Svantepolk, and that the shared patronage ultimately derived from a similar source as that of Kaga church.

Several other children of Magnus Bengtsson *Lagman* are recorded: daughters Margareta (d. 1275) and Sigrid (d. 1289) and Ulfhild (referred to above), who lived at least until 1279. The marriage to Birger Filipsson was Ulfhild's second, as she had an earlier husband, another Bengt Magnusson, whose lineage is uncertain.[155] In 1269, through an exchange of land with him in Östergötland, she had acquired a *gård* Hälleby, in the same *socken* as Hovby.[156] In 1279 some of Ulfhild's land in Kinda and Ydre *härad* was sold to Bengt Magnusson *Lagman* by Birger Filipsson and she received two *gengälder* in Vadsbo, Västergötland, in exchange.[157] Ulfhild's sister Margareta had also owned land in Östergötland, which she donated to the canons of Linköping for the good of her soul.[158] Little is known of Sigrid, except that she was buried in Skänninge nunnery. Margareta Klausdotter's chronicle says that she was of low birth, but this chronicle is so unreliable that nothing in it can be accepted without corroboration from other sources.[159]

To the south of Östergötland, in Småland, the late twelfth-century *Folkungaätten* may also have owned large tracts of land. In the early fourteenth century, land nearby (Döderhult, Döderhults *socken*, Ålems *by* and Strömserum, Ålems *socken*, Rockneby in Ryssby *socken* and Läggevi in Fliseryds *socken*, Handbörds *härad*) was owned by Ingrid, daughter of Svantepolk Knutsson. If her mother was Benedikta Sunesdotter, granddaughter of Folke Jarl, the land, or some of it, could have been inherited from Birger Brosa. Alternatively, she may have been a daughter by Svantepolk's second marriage, probably to a daughter of the German count Ernst von Gleichen: since Ingrid was still alive in 1350, and Benedikta is last heard of in 1268, this is more probable.[160] In addition Svantepolk is known to have owned other territory nearby, inherited from his Danish or *Sverkerska ätten*

Rörik's father was his grandson. The question of the Svantepolkdottrar and their mother(s) is discussed further below.

[155] He was, however, an inheritor from Karl Ulfsson, son of Ulf Jarl.

[156] DS 541.

[157] DS 671.

[158] DS 592.

[159] SRS 3:2, pp. 207–08.

[160] Gillingstam 1952 pp. 83–84.

ancestors—hence some or all of Ingrid's land may well have been inherited from him, rather than Birger, regardless of who her mother was.[161]

A contemporary of Ingrid, Ingeborg Bengtsdotter, was a daughter of Bengt Magnusson *Lagman*. Ingeborg married Birger Petersson of the *Finstaätten*. She owned coastal *gårdar* in Grönskog and Åby in Fliseryds *socken*, near the later settlement of Pataholm.[162] Ingeborg later took over land from Ingrid, since her son Israel Birgersson inherited the *curia* at Läggevi and land in Övre Åby from her in 1320.[163] By the same testament he inherited land in Stranda *härad* at Em, a *härad* for which his own *jordebok* (c. 1351) has provided most of the evidence.[164] Döderhult and Läggevi had been listed in Ingrid's testament as hers, and Ferm suggested that they might have been taken on grounds of past family ownership, changes having resulted from earlier exchanges between Birger Brosa and Magnus Minnesköld.[165] It also seems possible that there was a more recent connection, and that the two were co-heiresses, in which case they must have had the same mother. The lands they owned in Småland were certainly close. The origin of Ingrid's and Ingeborg's inheritances in Småland must remain uncertain, in light of this.

In 1320 Ingeborg's son Israel also inherited land in Boanäs, Botorp and Fluxerum (*Boanes, Botathorpe, Floknisrum*) in Karlstorps *skate*.[166] The same document lists several places from Målilla *socken* and Vena *skate* as inherited by Israel and the daughters Birgitta and Katarina.[167] In Målilla two place-names were copied from other regions, one Uppsala and the other Bjäl(e)bo, home of Ingeborg's ancestor. In 1301 Bengt

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[161] DS 1078 provides evidence that Svantepolk owned land in the region, as he made an exchange with the hospital in Oknabäck.

[162] DS 1866, DS 2260. See Ferm 1989 pp. 115–125.

[163] DS 2260.

[164] See DMS 4:2, pp. 25–137. The *härad* was later divided into Westremark and Östramark (cf. DS 3264, *Västremark*).

[165] Ferm 1989 p. 122.

[166] DS 1866, DMS 4:4 and DMS 4:2, p. 59. The *Finstaätten* owned land in Småland before the marriage of Birger and Ingeborg: for instance, Israel inherited a *gård* at Hultsby (*Hulzby*) in Norra Möre härad from his father Birger, and a land exchange in Handbörd and Stranda *härader* was made between Birger and Katarina daughter of Anna Bille in 1311: see DS 2658, DS 1818 and DS 1819.

[167] In Målilla *socken* Hagelsrum (*Haghulsrum*) was left by Ingeborg to be divided between her daughters Birgitta and Katarina as well as Israel, and Ekenäs (then *Huluszfarahult*), Ödhult (*Øahult*) and Mörhult (*Mørhult*) were inherited from her by Birgitta. In Vena Halingsryd (*Huluszrydh*) was also inherited by Birgitta.

Birgersson, bishop of Linköping, had also left a mark *spannmål* in Stranda to the hospital in Norrabygd.[168] All in all it seems probable that both the *Folkungaätten* and Svantepolk Knutsson's ancestors held land in Småland and Aspelund. The coastal region where these lands were concentrated was sparsely occupied in the early twelfth century, and owed its new importance largely to the production of bog-iron, which was exported from coastal settlements near rivers or water systems such as Alsterån. It would seem that colonisation from Östergötland was encouraged by the powerful families of the region because of this, beginning at some stage in the twelfth century. The influence of the *Folkungaätten* appears to have extended into Kalmar as the town expanded during the thirteenth century. Magnus Ladulås sold his patron's right to the church there to the bishop of Linköping, presumably the church built of Öland limestone in the early 1200s, but with an earlier tower.[169]

The half-brother of Bishop Bengt and Birger Jarl, Elof, must also have owned land in Östergötland in the mid-thirteenth century, since an undated document refers to his donation of two mills and a wood to Vreta, in exchange for the return of a *gård* which his son Filip (deceased) had earlier donated.[170] Elof's descendants owned land in both Östergötland and Öland. His son Johan, who became a knight of the Teutonic Order in 1281 and died in 1295, left land in Östergötland (in Aska *härad*) and Öland (Gräsgård) to Nydala monastery as a soul gift for him and his dead wife.[171] She had been a daughter of Karl Tjelvason (*Fånoätten*), whose manor Fåno was in Trögds *hundare*, Uppland. Johan's daughter Kristina owned land in both Aska and Gräsgård, as they are referred to alongside Fåno in the testament of 1293, written when she was dying of sickness.[172] A second son of Elof, Anders, left land to Skänninge convent, but he died before his brother, as his children were in Johan's care in 1295.[173] Skänninge had been founded in 1282 by one of Elof's daughters, Ingrid, who had previously been married to a certain Sigge, who

[168] DS 1352.
[169] DS 644, DMS 4:1, p. 274.
[170] DS 891.
[171] DS 805.
[172] DS 1096. Kristina was married to Birger Petersson of the *Finstaätten*.
[173] DS 1148. See Gallén 1957a pp. 27–29. They were Ragnhild (DS 1254), Elof (DS 1574) and Peter (DS 1574).

owned land in Öland, but by 1281 she had been in a Dominican nunnery for over ten years. Her sister Kristina was probably married before her, but also became a Dominican sister after her husband's death.[174] As further evidence of Elof's Östergötland landholdings and those of his father, the sons of one of Elof's daughters, Johan and Elof Brunkow, owned a *gård* Berga, which passed to Nydala as part of an exchange in 1312, and Elof Bengtsson, son of another of Elof's sons, also owned land in Konungsberg in Mjölby *socken* (*Kunungsbærghum parochia Mølloby*), which he donated to Alvastra in 1363.[175] In 1287 Elof's daughter Cecilia and her husband Magnus Karlsson possessed land in Farsum, Småland, but this land may have been Magnus's inheritance.[176]

A.1.9. *The descendants of Karl Döve*

There is no certainty about Karl Döve's marriage or marriages, but it has been argued that one might have been with a daughter of Ulf Jarl *gamla*. Virtually nothing is known of Karl's own landholdings, but among the *Folkungaätten* who inherited or acquired land in eastern Svealand were those descended from him, and a union between Karl and Ulf Jarl *gamla*'s daughter would certainly provide one explanation for this. Two of Karl's sons are known, Ulf 'Fase', who became Jarl in the 1230s, and Karl. Ulf's lands are also unidentified, and our only clue is his association with Knut Långe and Jarler, Archbishop of Uppsala. In one of the documents Ulf provides evidence of an agreement involving the people of Tiundaland, and Ulf coins were also minted at Uppsala.

Ulf Fase's son Karl is named 'junker' in several sources, suggesting that he was not married. He is almost certainly the Karl of *Erikskrönikan* who negotiates with Birger Jarl about the election of a new king in 1250.[177] Karl Ulfsson also appears as one of the witnesses alongside

[174] DS 1148 contains a reference to her marriage.

[175] DS 1830 and DS 6799. An attestation of DS 1830, together with an earlier donation of land in Berga to Alvastra by a priest called Åke, was made in 1401 (DS 20). This refers to 'Konunxberg', as in DS 6799, but the name is not used in the original documents DS 1204 and DS 1830.

[176] DS 951.

[177] Ek pp. 35–36.

dominus Karl Karlsson and several bishops to Birger Jarl's undated treaty with Lübeck (usually attributed to 1251–52).[178] He subsequently became a knight of the Teutonic Order and was killed in 1260. He left land on the coast of Södermanland (Bergshammar and Tullgärn) to the Teutonic Order hospital.[179] Another donation to Sko was witnessed by six relatives, and confirmed by King Valdemar.[180] The relatives were Bengt Magnusson, *lagman* of Östergötland, Bengt Magnusson, Peter Ragvaldsson and Folke, Magnus and Johan, sons of Johan Ängel. The land included the *gård* Fladstad (now Flasta), whose ownership by the monastery was later disputed by Peter Ragvaldsson.[181] Karl Ulfsson's cousin Ulf Karlsson (see below) is not named among the inheritors. Liljeholm explained this by suggesting that the above were inheritors on *junker* Karl's mother's side, and another half of his inheritance went to those on the father's side, but Carlsson argued that in this case both groups should have been witnesses to the Sko donation, and suggested that the inheritors' ancestors were sisters or brothers to one of Karl's ancestors, and Ulf, as cousin, was not an inheritor because his father was already dead.[182]

Carlsson suggested that a likely relationship which linked the *Ängelätten* to Ulf Fase would be that Johan Ängel's wife was sister to Ulf's wife. Since both would be daughters to Folke Jarl this would provide an explanation why Ulf was included among the *folkungar* (assuming that this meant those in close relationship to Folke Jarl's descendants) in *Hákonar saga*.[183] However, it might be argued that if Karl Döve was Birger Brosa's full brother the relationship of Ulf to Folke was already close.

The family of Karl Karlsson, Ulf Fase's brother, prospered rather more than Ulf's, continuing into the late sixteenth century. Karl was probably born in c. 1220 and died some time after 1252. He was very likely a supporter of Birger Jarl in his battles of the mid-

[178] ST 94.
[179] Papal Bull of Urban IV, 15/3 (1262), Riksarkivet.
[180] DS 538, DS 862.
[181] Peter is mentioned as dead in the testament of Magnus Johansson Ängel in 1292.
[182] Liljeholm 1952 pp. 41–42, S. Carlsson 1953 p. 87.
[183] This would have meant that Ulf Fase was married to his cousin's (or half-cousin's) daughter, but this could have happened either with papal dispensation or by ignoring Church canon law, although this was becoming rarer by the mid-twelfth century.

thirteenth century, being named 'Karl hertog Birges bror' in a fifteenth-century translation of a 1248 source.[184] His son Ulf Karlsson, born at approximately the same time that his uncle Ulf Fase died (1248), represented Magnus Ladulås as one of the four secular lords at the Göta river in 1276, is named as a knight in 1280 and died in the following year, being buried in Skänninge.[185] He owned some mills in Torshälla, Södermanland, and also land in *Akærø* (possibly in Oppunda *härad*, Södermanland), which may have been inherited from his grandfather.[186] The name of Ulf's wife is unknown, although Bjärne Beckman has argued that she may have been Ingeborg, daughter of the *lagman* of Tiundaland, Karl Ingeborgason.[187]

Ulf Karlsson's son Filip was also a knight and a member of the king's council, first referred to in 1296. He lived in *Langanæs* (Långnäs?), Östergötland, and owned land in Boberg, Göstring and Lysing *härader* in the same region, Norra Vedbo and Sevede in Småland, Bro, Norrunda and Rasbo *hundare* and Åkers *skeppslag* in Uppland and Öknebo in Södermanland, as well as land in Denmark.[188] Filip first married a female relative of Karl Gustavsson, then a daughter of Gödelin Gotskalksdotter, who also owned land in Bobergs *härad*, so some of his Östergötland landholdings may have been acquired through marriage, but most were probably old *Folkungaätten* landholdings. Like Filip Ulfsson, Ulf Karlsson's daughter Ingeborg owned land in Östergötland, in Asker, Bobergs, Skärkinds and Vifolka *härader*. In addition she held land elsewhere—in Kåkinds, Vadsbo and Vartolfta *härader* in Västergötland, Karlstads, Visnums and Ölme *hundare* in Värmland, Askers in Närke, Jonakers in Oppunda *härad* in Södermanland and Kinnevalds *härad* in Småland.[189] Again, at least some of her land in Svealand was probably inherited from her first husband, Knut Mattson (Lejonbalke), *lagman* of Närke from 1279 to 1283 and

[184] DS 364.

[185] DS 799; ASMÆ, *Annales 266–1430* p. 281 and *Ex Chronica regni Gothorum* p. 363; and Gillingstam and Möller 1957 pp. 296–310.

[186] DS 1403, DS 710.

[187] B. Beckman 1968–69 pp. 50–53. Beckman's case is not conclusive, but better than that for a marriage to Tore Bonde, which had been suggested previously.

[188] DS 1766, DS 1541, DS 1477. The last reference to him is in DS 3191, dated 1333. Filip first married a female relative of Karl Gustavsson, then a daughter of Gödelin Gotskalksdotter, who owned land in Bobergs *härad*.

[189] DS 1545. See also Gillingstam and Möller 1957, B. Beckman 1968–69 pp. 50–53; and 1962 p. 68, note 45.

member of the king's council in 1288.[190] He died in 1289, perhaps ten years before Ingeborg. Her second husband, Abjörn Sixtensson (Sparre of Tofta), subsequently owned land all over Svealand, in Uppland, Västmanland, Södermanland and Närke, and also in Östergötland and Denmark.

A.1.10. *The* Folkungaätten's *'oäkta gren'*

Another branch of the *Folkungaätten*, the 'oäkta gren' (illegitimate branch) descended from Birger Jarl's illegitimate son Gregers, established their manor in Svealand. There they owned a large amount of land in Håbo *hundare*, Uppland.[191] Nevertheless, their landholdings extended beyond Uppland, as witnessed by an exchange of land in Ängsö, Yttertybo *hundare* in Västmanland with Baldastad in Närke in 1272.[192] The Vellby canons received land in Vaksala. The name of Gregers's wife is unknown, but she owned land in *Hossastum* (possibly Hosta on Mörkö or Håsta in Överslö *socken*, Selebo *härad*, both in Södermanland).[193] Gregers had three sons, Knut, Magnus and Karl. Knut is recorded as having sold inherited land in Näs, Västerås, and also as owning land in Södermanland.[194] Magnus inherited land in Håbo hundare, Uppland, which he sold to Uppsala cathedral, but also owned land elsewhere.[195] Karl Gregersson, like Magnus, is first recorded in a document of 1285.[196] He owned land in both Uppland and Östgötaland, and married Ramborg Israelsdotter, daughter of the *lagman* of Tiundaland.[197] Magnus first married Ragnhild Erlandsdotter (*Finstaätten*), and later Ingegärd Filipsdotter, daughter of Filip Finvidson (*Rumbyätten*). The land which Gregers and his descendants owned in Östergötland was probably inherited from his father, but the origin of his land in Uppland, perhaps also surrounding areas,

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[190] DS 975.
[191] DS 1216. Gregers is earlier referred to as *dominus* in DS 618.
[192] DS 558.
[193] DS 747.
[194] DS 816 and DS 747.
[195] DS 1554, DS 1667 and DS 2141.
[196] DS 816.
[197] DS 1293, DS 1333 and DS 1339. Ramborg outlived Karl, and later married Arvid Gustavsson in 1315 (DS 2012), a knight who died with *Hertigar* Erik and Valdemar after the *gästabud* ('feast') of Nyköping in 1317.

is altogether more obscure. Given that there is no earlier evidence of either Magnus Minnesköld or his sons owning land in this region, it may well have been confiscated from rebels in 1248 or 1251.

A.1.11. *Other powerful families*

Few other families that appear in the sources after 1250 can be traced back to the pre-Folkung period. One such is Boberg (Matsson). The name Boberg may derive from a place-name. At the end of the thirteenth century Lars Boberg owned large tracts of land in Småland, Östergötland, Västergötland, Värmland, Närke, Västmanland and Södermanland. By 1283 he was one of the few who was listed as a knight.[198] Lars was a grandson of Sigtrygg, one of three sons to Bengt Matsson, who, alongside his brother Mats, is first heard of in the reign of Knut Eriksson.[199] Mats owned land in Småland, and is first referred to as *dominus* in the reign of Johan Sverkersson.[200] He died in 1219, but one of his sons took a woman who may have been Birger Jarl's half-sister as his second wife.[201] In view of their success and the known affiliation of Lars Boberg to Magnus Ladulås, members of the family were probably allies of at least some of the *Folkungaätten* for most of the period after Birger Brosa became Jarl, arguably the most successful branch, the descendants of Magnus Minnesköld, during and after the reign of Johan Sverkersson. The case of the Boberg ancestors illustrates that there must have been many other unknown families that played a part in the events of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The *Sverkerska ätten, Eriksa ätten* and *Folkungaätten* appear all the more dominant because the scarce sources name so few other kin-groups.

[198] DS 767.

[199] DS 70, 119 and 182. See also Koit 1957b pp. 22–25. Sigtrygg had two known brothers, Peter and Lars, and at least three other children besides Bengt, father of Lars. One daughter, Ulfhild, married Karl Ingeborgson, and another, Hafrid, married Gustav. Karl was certainly a *lagman*, and Gustav probably was also: see DS 483.

[200] DS 183.

[201] DS 182. See Liljeholm 1950 pp. 101–04.

APPENDIX TWO

SWEDISH FORTIFICATIONS AND PALACES

A.2.1. *Fortifications before the Folkung period*

A.2.1.1. *The coastal* kastaler

Borgholm

A castle at Borgholm is first known from written sources in the early fourteenth century. The ruins that can now be seen are largely of renaissance work, but the site was excavated in the 1920s, 30s and 70s. A round tower stood isolated in the medieval castle courtyard, but there are remains of an early defensive wall, which may have been connected to it.[1] Building technique showed that the wall was built later than the tower, and a cultural layer that could be linked to the construction of the wall showed that both predated the thirteenth-century castle. The tower is situated on the island of Öland in a strategic location that could have guarded the twelfth-century trading settlement at Köping, four kilometres to the east. But this disappeared before 1150, and Borgholm tower may well be a later foundation, perhaps a replacement for the prehistoric fort of Eketorp, which was re-used around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In view of its strategic location, it is conceivable that there was an earlier fort at Borgholm, as the Romanesque church within the later castle was called Borg in the fourteenth century and the name must be earlier. An earlier fort would explain why a king of c. 1200 might have built a castle here, and not in other equally suitable places.[2]

Fållnäs

A round tower at Fållnäs is known only from a map of 1767, whose legend proclaims that the tower was the site for pagan Viking fes-

[1] Rudolffsson 1990 pp. 12–18, Lovén 1996 pp. 76–77.
[2] Lovén 1996 p. 79.

tivities.[3] It seems to have been large (18.4 metres diameter) and unmoated. A later fortified building also existed. The tower was on a headland guarding the entrance to a narrow bay of no known importance, although a hollow was dug at the opposite end, making it possible to drag ships overland to the Södertälje sailing route. A nearby 'Snäcknäs hage' marked on the map is a possible indication that Fållnäs was a collection point for the *ledung* fleet. Fållnäs was a manor in the 1340s, but the land had earlier been donated to Sko monastery by Magnus Johansson of the *Ängelätten* in 1291.[4] This land too may therefore have belonged to the *Folkungaätten*, since Magnus was descended from Birger Brosa. The ruins of a house marked near the tower on the map have survived, its bottom level being late medieval. The tower may therefore have been constructed at any time from the twelfth century onwards.

Kalmar

During Olsson's excavations at Kalmar (1920–41) the base of a round *kastal* tower was unearthed in the east corner of the later castle, together with older wall foundations.[5] The foundations of a number of other buildings, both wooden and stone, which Åkerlund thought predated the late thirteenth-century curtain wall, have been identified nearby.[6] The tower was situated directly against the rear of the new wall on the highest part of the island, in such a way that it was clearly not designed as part of the later structure. Olsson argued that the area was a low moraine in c. 1150, the island created by excavation of a large moat at the end of the twelfth century. According to him, the earliest town buildings were also there. Despite having been involved in the same work, Åkerlund disagreed with Olsson on many points, arguing that an older curtain wall lay outside the late thirteenth-century castle wall. However, Olsson's argument that this wall was built to reinforce the shore when the castle was rebuilt and enlarged is probably correct, since the wall included brick.[7]

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[3] Lovén 1996 p. 440.

[4] DS 1049. See Gillingstam 1965c p. 173. Was this land inherited from Birga Brosa?

[5] Olsson 1932 pp. 285–90.

[6] Åkerlund 1977 p. 92.

[7] Olsson 1969 pp. 65–70; Åkerlund 1968 pp. 214–15. Lovén agrees with Olsson: Lovén 1996 p. 73.

Olsson believed the *kastal* was late twelfth-century, but the objects unearthed by him could not be definitely associated with specific building phases. Recent excavation has revealed a cultural layer below the *kastal*, dated to c. 1200.[8] The *kastal* must therefore be younger than this, the presence of brick indicating that it was probably built around or after the mid-twelfth century, but there is no certain evidence for Åkerlund's claim that it was late thirteenth-century in date. It is quite possible that the tower was constructed when a settlement at Kalmar was first established, in the early thirteenth century. This is the only round *kastal* for which any archaeological datings have been obtained. Its function may have been to mark the presence of the Swedish king's power, or even as a control point or toll house for traders, since the town most likely began to grow in the first half of the thirteenth century, according to Blomqvist the combined result of internal political factors and the expansion of German trading interests.[9]

Kungsladugården

The remains of the round tower of Kungsladugården lie three kilometres west of Nyköping. The site was a small island in the thirteenth century, which could have provided good defence of the mouth of the river Kilaån if extensive pileworks had also been used to block the channel, but for this there is no evidence. Nothing in the vicinity is known to have been important enough to guard against raiders, although four small churches (Kila, Bergshamra, Tuna and Lunda) twenty-five kilometres to the west did exist in the twelfth century. It is also possible that the tower guarded the later manor of Svanvik, owned by Elof Bengtsson in 1304.[10] Nearby villages and the manor of Stora Kungsladugården were probably later creations, no written evidence for them appearing until the sixteenth century. The *kastal* has been named after the manor.[11] Excavation revealed no evidence of occupation or damage from fire, hinting at only a short-term occupation, and it is possible that Nyköping castle replaced it as a centre of royal power, but this is mere speculation.[12] The land around

[8] Lovén 1996 p. 73.
[9] Blomkvist 1979 pp. 211–12.
[10] See DS 2467. 'Svanvik' included a wide area on a map of 1677: Lovén 1996 p. 439.
[11] Lovén 1996 p. 443.
[12] Such a theory was proposed by its excavator, Ivar Schnell: see Lovén 1996 p. 438.

belonged to the *Ängelätten*, and was possibly inherited from Magnus Minnesköld through his son Elof.

Stensö

Stensö is unexcavated, but the tower walls are preserved up to four metres in height, high enough to leave evidence of a room with Romanesque cross-vaulting, presumably designed to live in. Attached is a curtain wall, which contains brick as well as stone and so may be later in date. The *kastal* is on a cliff above Bråviken, and could have acted as a watchtower, but not to defend the bay, at the opposite end of which (thirty kilometres away) lies Norrköping. There is a *husaby* within a day's journey, but neither this nor any other settlement can be closely associated with it. A more likely explanation for its presence, if associated with any form of administration, is that the bay was a collection place for the *ledung* fleet. Stensö was a private manor in 1359, its owner Holmger Torkelsson, who was descended from Folke Jarl on his mother's side, so the tower may have been built by his family.[13]

Stockholm

The city and castle of Stockholm are known to have existed from the mid-thirteenth century, but a free-standing round tower, later known as Tre Kronor, also stood in the castle courtyard.[14] It is referred to clearly in *Erikskrönikan*.[15] All who have researched the castle have agreed that this *kastal* had already been built by the time construction of the larger castle began, although their datings differed.[16] Hansson and Ödman both suggested that this was built by Birger Jarl, in contrast to Olsson, who had argued that it predated the Folkung Period on the basis that it stood on its own and no brick was used in its construction.[17] However, he based this on comparison

[13] DS 6108–09, ÄSF pp. 107–08.

[14] The name derives from the decoration of Gustav Vasa's reign.

[15] Ek p. 63.

[16] Olsson dated the tower to the late twelfth century, but this is a guess based on architectural style and his assessment of the arrival period of influences from abroad. On the basis of progressive change in sea level Ödman estimated Tre Kronor as belonging to the middle or late thirteenth century, but this too is an uncertain method. See Olsson 1940 pp. 31–58, Ödman 1987 p. 73. See also Lovén 1996 pp. 87–88, 433–35, and Söderlund 2001 pp. 160–61, 164.

[17] Hansson 1956 pp. 29–30, Ödman 1987 pp. 157–70. Reconstructions of the tower are still based on the extensive work of Olsson: Olsson 1940 pp. 31–58.

with foreign structures, and no cultural layer earlier than 1200 has been uncovered at Stockholm castle.[18] Recent research suggests that it was built early in the thirteenth century.[19] In addition, it is now known that this tower did not stand alone, but among other buildings, one of which was a large rectangular stone structure ^{14}C dated to the period 1030–1230.[20] The *kastal* overlooked what was the only entrance to Lake Mälaren by c. 1200, but could not prevent the passage of shipping.

Strömserum

Strömserum *kastal* is situated on the mainland shore opposite Borgholm. Below the tower are traces of a wooden structure. This tower, situated on an island, must have guarded Alsterån river, and there are remains of a stone river barrier nearby. The small nearby town of Pata, situated upriver, is known to have existed in the sixteenth century, and may have been an export site for iron much earlier. In the fourteenth century, and probably earlier, land here was held by two ladies, Ingeborg Bengtsdotter and Ingrid Svantepolksdotter, who probably inherited it from the *Folkungaätten* through its *lagmansgren*.[21] Whether the Strömserum or Borgholm towers were designed to complement each other may be debated: although they lie only fifteen kilometres apart, signalling would have been hindered by the poor view over Kalmar sound from Strömserum. The Strömserum estate belonged to a member of the higher nobility in 1312, and no connection with the king or his agents is known.

The Norrland kastaler: *Totra, Välsta and Frölland*

These towers were small and more or less square in plan, and Välsta had an adjoining wall. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century descriptions indicate that the towers had two or three floors. No brick was used in their construction, and the upper levels may well have been wooden. The remains of several houses exist around the tower at Totra, although all probably did not exist at any one time, and three around Frölland, one of which was twenty metres long. This suggests that they belonged to *gårdar*. Välsta and Frölland (but not the

[18] Ödman 1987 pp. 168–70.
[19] Söderlund 2001 p. 164.
[20] Söderlund 2001 p. 164
[21] See Appendix 1.

towers) are not mentioned in written sources until the fourteenth century, and Totra not at all in medieval sources. Only the last has revealed any datable artefacts, pottery shards from the Viking and early medieval periods and a bronze plate from the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Datings from a burnt layer indicated that the fire occurred in the late thirteenth century.[22]

Who built the coastal kastaler?

All the coastal *kastaler* south of Norrland were round and unmoated and none had ground-floor doorways, a clear indication of a defensive function. To this extent they were similar, but there were also many differences. They vary in diameter from thirteen and a half to eighteen metres, with a still greater variation in wall thickness. However, similarity or lack of it does not tell us whether or not they were part of any royal scheme, since castles of the period 1250–1300 known to have been of royal inspiration also differ widely in form. The absence of brickwork and moats makes a Romanesque dating of the *kastaler* possible, but uncertain. In Denmark the round tower of Bastrup is dated to the beginning of the twelfth century, but the latest free-standing round tower was built in the early fourteenth century. Three towers which were certainly not royal constructions exist near churches on Gotland, one of which, Västergarn, guards a harbour.

Three of Sweden's coastal *kastaler* became part of royal castles in the late thirteenth century, and were therefore probably located on royal estates earlier, but the others were either built by lesser nobility or fell into private hands, and none of their owners are known to have been descended from Knut Eriksson. This does not rule out royal foundation, as they may have subsequently lost their usefulness to the king, but the few available datings indicate that Stockholm and Kalmar towers were built after Knut Eriksson's reign, while there is nothing to suggest that all the coastal towers were built at one time or with one purpose. If any family had a hand in more than one of them, it was the *Folkungaätten.*

The Norrland *kastaler* are of a different type from the others. Although these towers were near the coast of Gästrikland and Hälsingland, and therefore on the sailing route into the Gulf of

[22] A. Broberg 1990 p. 125.

Bothnia, there is no evidence that they had any connection with twelfth- or thirteenth-century royal administration.[23] Totra was situated near the shore of Hamrångefjärd, which Broberg believed would have been a suitable collection point for the *ledung* fleet, but no sign of any harbour has been found. Välsta and Frölland are only two kilometres apart, in Stegsund, and it is difficult to believe that both were used by the crown simultaneously. The thirteenth century was certainly the period in which the crown began to assert its power in Norrland, but *Hälsingelagen* indicates that forces were sent from Uppland to collect taxes at regular intervals, rather than from bases in the locality. In any case, the towers are small and would have been very vulnerable to a hostile local populace.

Mats Mogren thinks the towers may indeed have been built as a result of increased royal interference in the region, but by local nobility opposed to this. Certainly there was opposition to high taxation in 1316, when a revolt broke out. Hallström's theory that Välsta belonged to the archbishop is less likely, although the ruin was thought to be a church foundation later in the Middle Ages.[24] His point that Välsta's peripheral location makes it more likely to have been built by outsiders is arguable, but local aristocracy might also have had an interest in keeping watch on their coast. Totra and Välsta were connected to probable villages and Frölland was centrally positioned in the landscape, so all may well have belonged to local landowners, an idea favoured by Lovén, although the strong similarity between the Välsta and Frölland towers that he observes need not necessarily indicate a common origin.[25] Their modest dimensions also make a royal foundation unlikely, although local nobles may have done the king's work.

A.2.1.2. *Other pre-Folkung fortifications in Sweden*

Lödöse

It is possible that there was a castle at Lödöse before the Folkung Period, guarding Sweden's only exit port to the west. *Hákonar saga* refers to the destruction of a castle here (*Ljöðhús*) by Håkon's *birkibeinar*

[23] A. Broberg 1989 p. 75.
[24] Mogren 1994b p. 84.
[25] Lovén 1996 p. 449.

in 1227, but no source mentions a castle here again before the reign of Magnus Ladulås.[26] Of the earlier castle nothing has been found. Although *Hákonar saga* speaks of a 'kastallan', this does not necessarily correspond to the modern Swedish usage of *kastal*, so it cannot be assumed that a fortified tower existed in 1227. The fortification is more likely to have been on flat ground, unlike the later castle, and may have been no more than a palisade.[27] Another possibility is that the *Hákonar saga* fortification was a small fortified tower on Tegelkullen hill 300 metres to the south of Lödöse settlement, which does not appear in any other written source. Its excavator, Rune Ekre, guessed that it was built after 1250, but no datable finds were found by him.[28] Nor can it be certain whether this was a watch-tower, for which purpose it was well placed, or a tower with living quarters for a local landowner.

Näs

The castle of Näs on the island of Visingsö retained its importance throughout the period 1130–1290. It disappears from sources after being besieged and captured by the opponents of King Birger Magnusson in 1318. It is likely that the whole castle was built at one time, although some brick additions were probably made later. The ruins consist of a west round tower joined by a wall, probably the north wall of a hall, to a square tower at the east end. However, part of the castle has vanished due to erosion of the coast on which it stands, so the south linking wall and possibly more have disappeared. Brick has been found only outside the east tower, having probably fallen from a higher level added after the building was completed.[29] Traces of fire may be a relic of the siege of 1318. There is no comparable fortification in Sweden, and the walls of the round tower and adjoining hall are not particularly strong by later standards. Although Lundberg speaks of flanking towers, neither can be described as such. Näs was a fortified *palatium*, and must have functioned as much as a symbol of the status of Götaland kings as a fortress.

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[26] Hákonar saga 150, pp. 74–75.

[27] Lovén 1996 p. 60, citing Eriksson, 1995, who argues that the word 'virki' implies such a work.

[28] Ekre 1985 p. 206.

[29] E. Lundberg 1938.

Nyköping

In the north-east corner of Nyköping castle (see below) was a square tower that probably predated the curtain wall, although it was attached to it. The tower was built of granite, as was the bottom of the south-west tower, which had upper levels of brick and was probably later in date. The construction of the north-east tower suggest that it was built before the rest of the castle, but without systematic research it is impossible to say whether this was immediately before or some decades earlier. Free-standing towers continued to be built in the Folkung period, such as the one at Stegeborg.[30]

Uttersberg

Although it hardly qualifies as a coastal tower, the tower of Svintuna, or Uttersberg (Krokeks *socken*, Östergötland)), has often been linked with the coastal round towers. It lies twenty kilometres west of Stensö on the shore of a small lake north of Bråviken. Little of Bråviken can be seen from it. The tower is also round, though only nine metres in diameter, and its remains are of granite.[31] No sign of brick has been found, but the tower has not yet been properly researched and cannot be dated. It has attracted attention because it lies on the *eriksgata* route from Uppland. The exact area covered by Svintuna is unclear, but it appears in several late medieval documents. Even the place-name component *tuna* need not signify an Iron Age *gård* in Östergötland, as it probably does in Uppland. Nevertheless, Nordén's excavations of 1936 uncovered a cemetery and finds from the seventh century onwards two kilometres to the south-east of Uttersberg.[32] Possibly Uttersberg was the 'Berg' of a 1399 document, which mentions a mill and a number of other properties as part of the king's *treding*. While Uttersberg may have been part of the king's *treding*, this does not tell us how old it was. This has not prevented a number of scholars from suggesting that the tower of Svintuna may have functioned as a safehouse for the king or his agents on their travels in the thirteenth century or even earlier.

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[30] Fritz 1973 p. 81. See Ek p. 171, telling of its destruction.
[31] The inside is round, but the outer wall has disintegrated.
[32] Nordén 1938 pp. 222–37.

Swedish fortifications that may have been built before 1250

In addition to the above there are several places where there may have been early royal fortifications. Like the coastal *kastaler*, some may have fallen into private hands by the time written sources become plentiful. It has been suggested, for instance, that Aranäs, where the date of foundation is uncertain, was one such.[33] *Erikskrönikan* implies that the castle was in the possession of the *marsk* Tyrgils Knutsson in 1305, but he is known to have taken over other residences that previously belonged to the *Folkungaätten*.[34] If built before 1250 by this family, it could have been a private residence.

The date of building at Gälakvist is also unknown. It first appears in written sources in 1272, when King Valdemar sent two letters from there, but the only clear record of any fortification is in *Erikskrönikan*.[35] According to this, Skara was the centre of the 1278 rebellion, and Magnus Ladulås subsequently met the rebels in 'gelqwist', referred to as a *gård*, before seizing them and dragging them off to Stockholm.[36] The 'Skara hus' to which *Hertig* Erik Magnusson's wife Ingeborg fled after King Birger had imprisoned her husband (his brother) in 1317 may have been the same place, but is more likely to have been Axvall.[37] The site is a low mound with a flat top. It is unexcavated and any castle is totally impossible to reconstruct from the scattered stone and brick material. Although not a particularly strong site, no better site was available in the vicinity, and it was strengthened by deep steep-sided ditches around it.[38] Whether these were built before or after the stone walls is uncertain. In view of the soft ground Lovén is inclined to regard it as a royal *gård* which was fortified in its later years, but not of any great strength or importance after 1250. It was also eight kilometres east of Skara settlement, too far away to defend it. Since there is no evidence that it was a centre of royal administration,[39] and it was named 'new Axvallhus' in 1315; Fritz suggested it was 'new' by comparison with Gälakvist, and so may have been its predecessor.[40]

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[33] Lovén 1996 pp. 275–76.
[34] Ek p. 109.
[35] DS 557 and DS 1714.
[36] Ek p. 63.
[37] Ek p. 161.
[38] Lovén 1996 pp. 64–65, after Sigsjö 1986.
[39] Fritz 1973 p. 64.
[40] Fritz 1972 p. 42.

A.2.1.3. *Swedish fortifications in Finland*

The first fort documented as built by the Swedes outside Sweden itself was Leal (Lihula), taken and destroyed by the Estonians in 1220. Sweden made no further attempt to establish a presence in Estonia, but did achieve this in central Finland at some stage during the mid-thirteenth century. South-western Finland was already Christianised, at least in name, as part of a long process of Swedish penetration, which may have been less warlike than the legend of St Erik suggests.

Borgå

Several scholars have maintained that the hillfort at Borgå (Fin. Porvoo, Uusimaa) was a Swedish fort in the Middle Ages, and even that it was the fort of the *Erikskrönikan* crusade, or was built during the Danish attack of 1190.[41] Such ideas are now rejected, partly on the grounds that the 'Finland' of Swedish and Danish sources could have referred to anywhere east of Åland.[42] Voionmaa's claim that the land was a *kungsgård* is no more than a guess, and there is no more evidence for Gardberg's claim (now apparently abandoned by him) that there was a 'Borgen' with a *borgherre*.[43] No name for any fort here is recorded from the Middle Ages, although it is one possibility for a still unidentified fort, 'Wartholm'.[44] However, it is unarguable that the site would have been a useful place to build a fort. It was situated on an almost rectangular plateau on a moraine hill, which guards an important river route into the interior of Finland. The position was strengthened by features not found at any native prehistoric fort site in Finland, a deep inner ditch and a shallower outer one, which almost encircle the hill. Datable finds belong to the ninth century and fourteenth century, but the site was used as a park in the nineteenth century and the ditches dug out, so much

[41] A. Schück 1952a. Juhani Rinne suggested that the fort was built by the Danes during their attack of 1190: Rinne 1923 pp. 12–17.

[42] Gallén 1964.

[43] Gardberg 1952.

[44] Jeppe Djäken argued that this was Borgå fort, built in 1395–98. There is no proof of his theory, although the short period of use would explain the lack of medieval finds. See Edgren and Gardberg 1996 pp. 164–66. A problem with Djäken's theory is the name Wartholm, since other *holm* sites were often on islands. See Mattison 1986 pp. 12–18.

may have been lost.[45] No written source tells of the site, and it is not mentioned specifically in a list of places destroyed at Borgå in 1508. The first mention of a fort is in 1555, but this does not necessarily indicate that the fort existed in this period, only that the place was then recognised as a former defended site.[46] The name Borgå (first documented in 1327) also suggests a fort by the river, but gives no indication of when the hill was fortified. Given the dates of finds, this was probably during the reign of Albrecht, to which belong also the Finnish coastal fortifications of Sibbo (Sipoo) and Högholmen.

Hakoinen

A much better candidate site for the 'taffwesta borg' of *Erikskrönikan* is that at Hakoinen (near Janakkala, Häme), not least because it is in Tavastland.[47] Regrettably there is no written source that tells us anything about the site before 1411, when a reference is made to a mill in King Erik's *gård*.[48] In 1625 'gamble Tauaste hus' at Haga (Hakoinen) south of Janakkala is mentioned.[49] In this case, however, archaeological datings indicate clearly a Swedish occupation.[50] Excavated artefacts, which included a coin from the reign of Birger Magnusson, are dated to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, while finds of brick and armour-piercing arrowheads, unknown in prehistoric Häme, indicate that it was not native people who used it. The fort is in a strategic location on the perimeter of the Lake Vanaja region, and also has easy access (or retreat) to the Gulf of Finland. It consisted of a main fort on a high and steep hill, with a curtain wall of granite blocks and brick following the edge of the escarpment and buildings inside, and an outer bailey some twenty metres lower. An apparently incomplete ditch was dug around this. If the crusade was in 1237–38, one of the suggested dates, and Birger Magnusson (later jarl) did build it, the brick would indicate that his fort was reconstructed later. A fort of wood

[45] Edgren and Gardberg 1996 p. 163.
[46] . . . *then bårg, som ligger på backen wed Bårgo prestegard*. Edgren and Gardberg 1996 pp. 159–60.
[47] Ek p. 32.
[48] FMU 1360.
[49] Rinne 1914 p. 251.
[50] Taavitsainen 1990 pp. 164–69.

would in any case be more likely as an initial foundation, particularly if there was immediate threat of attack. The position of the Hakoinen fort would still have been very defensible. At a later date a fort was constructed on the present site of Hämeenlinna, in a location with better access to and from central Häme, although the occupation of these forts appears to overlap.[51]

Liedon Vanhalinna

Vanhalinna (near Lieto, Varsinais-Suomi) was possibly a Swedish fort in this region. It is about six kilometres away from Koroinen, the first seat of the bishop of Finland. The evidence that this was a Swedish royal foundation is not conclusive. Much later, in 1438, a 'gambla husith' on crown land in Lunda *socken* was passed over to the Archbishop. The word *hus* often referred to a fortified residence or castle, but this one is identified as 'Wanhalinna' only in a gloss. One kilometre away from Vanhalinna is Haga. The name *haga* often referred to a *kungsgård* or royal castle in late medieval sources. None of these show clearly that the fort was Åbo castle's predecessor, nor is it certain when the name Vanhalinna, the Finnish equivalent of *gamla hus* (old castle) was first applied, or that it referred to a fort which belonged to the Swedish crown in the thirteenth century. The hillfort is well situated on the route to Åbo from the interior (Häme), the later *harkkatie* (ox-road), and had good communications with the coast, although too far from Åbo or Koroinen to be ideally situated for their defence.

Vartiokylän linna

In 2002 excavations were carried out at the site of a fort on a rocky outcrop at Vartiokylä near Helsinki.[52] There is no mention of this fort in any written source, and popular imagination had placed it in the Viking Age. However, unearthed artefacts showed that it had had two periods of occupation, one during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, and one in the late fourteenth century. Although the style of construction, wall bases made from large rocks surmounted by palisades, resembled the native forts of Häme, the

[51] Hakoinen may be the fort of 'Vanai' (Fin. *Vanaja*) mentioned in the Novgorod Chronicle account of the 1311 raid into Finland. See Chapter 12:4.

[52] Heikkinen 2003 pp. 34–42.

region in which it was built was sparsely inhabited before Swedish settlement began in c. 1250. The fort could have built as defence against any possible native reaction to this, or, as the majority of forts in the interior almost certainly were, against attacks from Novgorod. Like many of the interior forts, Vartiokylä could have been a refuge for local people and a watch post (as the Finnish word *vartio* suggests). Given the poor evidence for contemporary habitation in the immediate neighbourhood, the latter seems more likely.

A.2.1.4. *Defensible churches*

A number of defensible churches and church towers (often referred to as church *kastaler*) were built before the Folkung Period, almost certainly by local nobility.[53] One group of fortified churches was rectangular or Romanesque in form, and had more than one floor.[54] Whether those that had no firing gallery should be considered as fortified is debatable. It has been argued that upper levels of churches with a secular function may have been used for local meetings or even craft manufacture.[55] A few of these churches are thought to have been in the Stockholm area, and some were built in Norrland and Ångermanland, but the majority were in the Kalmarsund region, on Öland or the Möre coast. Even here most churches were not fortified, while some otherwise unfortified structures, such as Hossmo (built in the early twelfth century), had upper levels or defensible towers added. A second group of churches was round and most were clearly built with defence in mind. Those in Västergötland probably were not, most apparently having had only one level, but there were others in the Stockholm region, Östergötland, Småland and Öland. The largest example is Hagby in Småland, which was obviously part-fortification.[56] On stylistic grounds the churches of the Kalmarsund region were originally dated to the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, and in this case the few scientific datings and coin finds have borne this out. Hossmo's upper level was added in c. 1240, and Halltorp in Möre and the tower of Bredsättra were

[53] Anglert 1993 pp. 144–70.
[54] Several, such as Alböke in Öland, were of *klövsadel* form, with several lofts above the lower floor or floors.
[55] Karin Andersson 1983.
[56] Lovén 1996 p. 358.

built at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The round Voxtorp church was also built in this period.[57] Many of these churches were built on or near land later owned by descendants of Birger Brosa and Magnus Minnesköld, who possibly encouraged settlement from Östergötland in the Småland and Öland coastal regions.[58] The churches could have functioned as tax-gathering centres, but their location, mostly in places which were near settlement but were not in themselves easily defensible, suggests that they are more likely to have been refuges for the local community and defence against external raids.

Although detached towers in some Swedish churchyards may have been defensible, this is uncertain, as most of the towers have been destroyed, and some may have been simply bell towers.[59] Only the round tower at Vrigstad (which appears on a map of 1807) was comparable to those on Gotland. The church was Romanesque and the bishop of Linköping had a residence there by the late twelfth century. Kumla church, a gothic construction, also had a square tower with at least one arrow loop, mentioned in 1513, but this was certainly not built at the same time as the Romanesque church. Other towers which might have been fortified existed at Fellingsbro, Harmånger and Forsa, but like that at Kumla were probably built in the late Middle Ages.

A few churches may have had defensible curtain walls in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. Alböke on Öland had a *gård* wall, which made the site quite defensible, although the church itself seems to have had few defensive features, and Koroinen in Finland, which became the seat of the bishop in c. 1230, seems to have had a palisade and also a ditch on its east side, the one side without a steeply sloping approach. On the south side were two defensible stone buildings.[60] In most other cases the dates of defensible walls attached to churches and moats around them are either uncertain or belong to the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The concentration of defensible churches in Öland and Småland could signify several things. It may have been no more than a local

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[57] Lovén 1996 p. 359.
[58] Anglert 1993 pp. 166–70.
[59] The two are not necessarily incompatible—a tower could be fortified and contain a bell, which might be used for warning of attack.
[60] Gardberg 1973 pp. 57–59, 74, and Koivunen 1977 pp. 75–79.

fashion, but strife is likely to have been a contributory factor. This was a region where royal power had not yet been asserted, so local noblemen may have built them as a symbol of their own power, but Danish, Wendish and Estonian fleets are all known to have posed a threat to it in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Given the date of the buildings, this is the most likely explanation for their construction, and the one most favoured by several Swedish scholars.[61]

A.2.2. *Fortifications of the Folkung Period*

A.2.2.1. *Royal castles*

Åbo (Turku, Finland)

Unlike many of the other sites, the castle at Turku has been well investigated. Knut Drake believes that it was constructed in c. 1280 as a fortified camp for Swedish troops during the continuing battle with Novgorod for supremacy in the eastern Baltic. The dating is based partly on similarity in construction to the town walls of Visby and churches in the Åland Islands, but this gives no more exact dating than that provided by the coins and written sources, that it was constructed between the 1250s and c. 1300. However, if a fifteenth-century document is correct in stating that the first *hövitsman* for 'Finland Proper' was appointed in 1280, this would be a likely time for the fort's construction.[62] It had become a castle by 1300.[63] Two coins of 1250–65 and 1275 were found in the castle, but it is not named in any source until 1308, when it appears together with Tavasthus and Viborg (*Aaboo, Tavestahus et Wiborgh*).[64] The first castle was a rectangular fort with a gate tower protruding from the centre of the west wall and lesser gates in north and south walls. Walls were of granite blocks with brick infill, and probably had interior walkways.

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[61] Tuulse also interpreted the defensible churches of Norrland as responses to Karelian raids, but the evidence for them is virtually non-existent. *Ek*'s statement that Karelians burnt Sigtuna is most likely an error, a guess that the pagans who burnt Sigtuna were the 'pagan' enemies of the author's own period: Tuulse 1955.

[62] See Fritz 1973 p. 115.

[63] Drake 1993 pp. 27–36.

[64] DS 1577.

Axvall

Erikskrönikan relates that the Danish king Erik Glipping retired to Axvall and halted there to await an attack by Magnus Ladulås.[65] The campaign occurred in 1277, and as Lovén has pointed out, the account suggests that there was then already a fortification at Axvall. A source of 1417 says that Magnus Ladulås met Brynolf Algotsson there in 1288.[66] The main fortification at Axvall was located in a strong position on a promontory. It consisted of a rectangular curtain wall with buildings inside, but probably also had flanking towers. The direction from which it was most exposed, the south-west, was defended by the thickest wall and deepest ditch. Although *Erikskrönikan* mentions an outer fortification, Erik's attack need not have taken place at this site. An outer fortification might have existed on the mound between the two south-western ditches of Axvall, but Lovén suggests that the one referred to is more likely to have been Trågenborg, a lesser fortification 200 metres to the west on the opposite side of a marsh. The nature of its site makes a motte and wooden tower construction a possibility, but it is not possible to determine whether it was built before or after the main castle, whose foundation is itself of uncertain date. Yet another possibility for the events of 1277 is Bjurbackarna, situated 300 metres to the south of Axvall on a similar moraine promontory. Again, this could have been an outlying fortification of Axvall, or its predecessor, an alternative 'old' Axvall instead of Galakvist. It was probably a wooden castle, but somewhat stronger than Trågenborg.[67]

Borgholm

The name Borgholm first appears in written sources in 1285, but no castle is named until 1308.[68] This castle was constructed above the earlier defensive wall mentioned above. By the mid-fourteenth

[65] Ek p. 58. The chronicle tells us that Erik was spoiling for battle, or at least to cause more devastation. Sadly for him his plans were interrupted by an untimely outbreak of peace between Valdemar and Magnus. It is more likely that Erik and Magnus decided to make peace, since Valdemar gained nothing by this.

[66] Vita S: Brynolphi. Fritz did not accept this as correct, but in view of the other evidence given by Lovén it may be. See Fritz 1973 p. 63 and Herman Schück 1963a p. 179, Lovén 1996 p. 67.

[67] Lovén 1996 p. 69.

[68] DS 815 and DS 1577.

century it was built on a square plan with four battlemented walls and four half-round corner towers. It is possible that there were other towers along the walls. There was an intermediate period of building in which walls were constructed in the north-east and south-west, the north-east wall adjoining a fortified building known as the 'old royal hall' (*gamla kungshuset*). Unusually, this second phase lay outside the third phase walls. This third phase was constructed in the later thirteenth century, according to Rudolfsson, and there were already protruding half-round towers at north-east and south-west corners, possibly at the others as well. There is good evidence that the town of Borgholm was new in the mid-1280s, the earliest being a charter to raise taxes which appears to refer to Borgholm (the *borg* being unnamed) from 1281.[69]

Jönköping

'Castro junakøpung' was the place of issue of one of Magnus Ladulås' documents in 1278.[70] No mention of a castle here occurs after 1309, which implies that it had disappeared before the partition of 1310. Confusion has been caused by the *Erikskrönikan* statement that King Birger installed himself and his men here in 1309, building a wooden castle. In the same year his brother Erik burnt down a castle built by the Danes at Jönköping. The Danes were Birger's allies, and the two could therefore be the same place. Resolving this problem is not easy, since no trace of any castle of the period before the mid-fourteenth century has been uncovered. One possible site was that of the later Rumlaborg castle, built on royal initiative in the 1360s, but there are several others. There is certainly no reason to doubt that a castle existed at Jönköping, which was in a strategic position between Vättern and the sea and lay on the main route from Danish possessions northwards into Småland. Junabäck, one of the places on the route of the *eriksgata*, lay just to the west.

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[69] DS 736.

[70] DS 654. Whether this was the same castle as one in Sanda, possibly the *socken* just to the east of Jönköping and where Magnus also issued a letter in 1281, is uncertain, but Sanda appears to be in another location than the *junaköpung* of the 1278 letter, in which Sanda (but no castle) is mentioned. This would mean that a castle was built there between 1278 and 1281, presumably as replacement for the other Jönköping castle, and subsequently vanished.

Kalmar

In 1336 King Magnus Eriksson referred to Kalmar as 'our most powerful castle and town'.[71] Although not named in any document before 1308, the castle he was referring to was probably founded in the 1270s or 80s, although Olsson dated it to the end of the thirteenth century on the basis of its gothic style.[72] However, it must have taken some years to build. It was built on the island created earlier, around and above older buildings. Construction may have begun when Magnus Bengtsson of the *Folkungaättens lagmansgren* was *fogde* in Kalmar. He is named as *fogde* in a document of uncertain date, but belonging to the period 1255–61.[73] Magnus was also the *lagman* of Östgötaland, Småland being included in his jurisdiction. *Fogdar* of high noble birth were as a rule appointed to towns with castles, which functioned as their bases, but his first castle was probably the *kastal* and associated buildings, possibly with a curtain wall.

The town is certainly older than the late thirteenth-century castle, and the early construction of that was hidden by later rebuilding. Nevertheless, it has been extensively researched, and despite later addition and alteration is known to have had a wall with four flanking towers and two others at the end of the thirteenth century. On the west side was a gatehouse, and on the north (facing more or less north-east) a lesser one. The powerful main gatehouse had gothic decoration, and the interior of the lesser one was decorated with paintings. All the latest defensive features were included; it appears that each tower had two upper floors with shooting galleries, and wooden hoardings were also constructed on the north and west corner towers, overhanging the walls.[74] On the south-west side remains of an outer bailey (Bagaregården), accessed by a gate in the south-west wall, have been uncovered, probably built after the main castle. *Erikskrönikan* refers to people firing from the defences of Kalmar, but does not tell us whether this was from towers or walls, or from castle or town defences.[75] The whole castle was situated on an island within the perimeter of the medieval town. Stockholm

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[71] DS 3267: . . . *wart mæktugaste huus ok stadh Calmarnae*. See Fritz 1972 p. 42, Åkerlund 1977 p. 41.
[72] DS 1577.
[73] Blomkvist 1979 pp. 167–310
[74] Åkerlund 1977 pp. 104–10.
[75] Ek p. 134.

castle may have been stronger than Kalmar, but no other castle was superior in design.[76]

Lödöse

Here there was an earlier *kastal*, which may have had walls added in the years around 1250. The castle was built in the 1270s and pulled down in 1473.[77] It appears in a relatively early written source, when given as pledge to the Danish king by Magnus Birgersson in 1279.[78] Planks laid under material excavated to make the outer ditch were dated to the 1260s, so the work on the main castle must have begun then, or a little earlier. Inside this ditch was an inner one, and both encircled a hill ten metres high. On this was a main structure, from which cellars and the remains of a hypocaust were found, and an outer bailey on the south side.[79] However, it is not certain whether the earliest castle was of wood or stone. It is possible that this hill was the site of the earlier fort attacked by the *birkibeinar* in 1227, but no trace has been found if this is the case.

Nyköping

Another castle which was destroyed in the rebellion that followed Birger's murder of his brothers was Nyköping.[80] The two brothers were starved to death, according to tradition, in a tower of the castle. Nyköping was also the place where the former king Valdemar was imprisoned in 1288. This appears to have been one of the earliest Folkung Period castles. Birger Jarl obtained the land from Gudhem nunnery as part of an exchange in 1253, probably with

[76] Comparisons have been made with French and English castles, especially those Edward I built in Wales. It is not a concentric castle, but its overall plan is reminiscent of Harlech and Beaumaris and the polygonal north tower (later known as the *kungsmaktstornet*) of the towers of Caernarfon (themselves reminiscent of those in the walls of Constantinople). A link is possible, but the building of Kalmar was simultaneous with that of Edward's castles. An irregular feature of Kalmar is the eastern corner, as the round tower is not actually on the corner, the wall continuing south-eastwards for a short distance before bending to the south-west. The reason for this may be that the *kastal* tower was still standing directly behind this bend in the wall.

[77] Fritz 1973 p. 61.

[78] ST 1:31.

[79] Ekre 1985 pp. 203–05.

[80] Ek p. 171.

the purpose of building the castle, after it had been donated to the nuns by Queen Katarina in 1250.[81] According to *Erikskrönikan*, Magnus Birgersson (later King Magnus Ladulås) obtained 'nyköpungs hwss' as part of his *jarladöme* in 1266.[82] Although standing remains of the original castle no longer exist, its basic plan is clear, consisting of a rectangular main castle with two outer baileys, situated on what was probably an island when it was founded.[83] An attacker obtaining entrance by the gateways would have had to pass through both baileys to reach the door to the main building on its east side. All were probably constructed in the same period. Lundberg has shown that the construction technique of the walls closely resembles that of the earliest parts of nearby Nicolai church, built in c. 1250.[84] The oldest parts of the medieval town, which lay close by, have been dated to the twelfth century. The castle was built in such a position that it could prevent enemy attack by blocking access to the town and levy tolls on any incoming ships.

Stegeborg (Stäkeborg)

Stegeborg is the one royal castle in Östergötland that was probably built in the thirteenth century. It was on a large island in the estuary of the bay of Slätbaken, where a trading place was earlier situated. It is first named in 1307, when, along with Östergötland, it was given to King Birger as part of his agreement with his brothers.[85] Since Birger bought land here two years earlier, Fritz thought this might have been the time when building began, but *Magnúss saga* mentions a castle here in 1276.[86] Several of Birger's letters were issued from Stegeborg between 1310 and 1318, when the castle was besieged, captured and destroyed by his enemies. The *Erikskrönikan* tale of this siege gives the first account of the use of medieval siege engines in Sweden, although the castle finally surrendered through starvation. It was rebuilt in 1380. The later castle was rectangular, with a square tower at the south-east corner and a protruding round tower in the middle of the west wall. The square tower was the old-

[81] DS 405 and DS 377.
[82] Ek p. 45.
[83] One indication of this is the curved walls of the baileys.
[84] E. Lundberg 1929 p. 235.
[85] ST 164.
[86] Magnúss saga 5, p. 473.

est part of the castle, dated to the end of the thirteenth century on grounds of its brickwork.[87] Since it does not sit on the island's highest point and could not possibly defend the island, it is probably an example of a castle that was built more as a symbol of royal power than as a defensive work. Nevertheless, the island was in an important location, guarding the approaches to Söderköping, a town that began to grow in the mid twelfth century.[88]

Stockholm

The first reference to 'castrum nostrum Stokholm' and its *hövitsman* occurs in 1288, but this does not tell us what the *castrum* then consisted of.[89] Coin finds of the period 1248–1279 have been made on the site, but many cultural layers have been disturbed over the centuries.[90] Apart from the *kastal*, there is considerable doubt as to what fortifications may have preceded the later castle. Between 1978 and 1981 there were archaeological excavations on Helgeandsholmen.[91] They revealed that the ground had been cleared in the tenth and eleventh centuries, had later become overgrown, and was cleared again in the thirteenth century.[92] Oak piles were dated by dendrochronology to c. 1000. Ödman associated this work with the reigns of Olof Skötkonung and Anund Jakob, believing he had also found evidence of a moated fort from the same period.[93] Lovén pointed out that no other fort of this type dating to before the thirteenth century has been found on the Swedish mainland, and argued that the excavation of the ditch was connected with the construction of the north wall of the castle in the late thirteenth century.

Ödman also believed that there was a later undocumented fort on the island. A wall of granite and brick was erected along the shore, and piles were sunk to block off the channel between the two islands and the mainland to the north. This directed water traffic through Söderström, on the south side of Stadsholmen. Pottery found in silt dumped during medieval construction was dated to the mid

[87] Lovén 1996 p. 81, citing a conversation with Gunilla Malm.
[88] H. Andersson 1990 pp. 47–50.
[89] DS 975.
[90] Fritz 1972 p. 41.
[91] The archaeological investigations are detailed in Dahlbäck [ed] 1982 pp. 16–24. There is a reconstruction on p. 43. See also Ödman 1987 pp. 75–150.
[92] Based on pollen analysis.
[93] Ödman 1987 pp. 116–132.

or late thirteenth century, conforming with the evidence of the use of brick.[94] According to Ödman's interpretation, this construction was a fortification in itself, but Lovén argues that it is unlikely to have been this, or even an outer fort for the main castle, since the wall can have been neither strong nor more than two metres high. Remains of a jetty discovered on the shore along the outside of the wall would seem to reinforce his conclusion that the wall was built for the purpose which it served in the fourteenth century, as an enclosing wall for the cemetery of the Helgeandeshus.[95]

A bridge, Norrbro, was built before 1280, crossing the west island and connecting the original island with the north shore. However, the depth of the sailing channel was reduced sharply to less than one metre by c. 1300, which made much of this work redundant. If Ödman was right and the shore wall was a fortification, this would provide an explanation for the donation of the islands to a hospital and almshouse, which was made official in 1334. Part of the earlier wall was then built into the church. The first mention of Helgeandshus is from 1301, and the island is mentioned as having been consecrated in the archbishop's letter of 1320.

The outline of the medieval castle was originally reconstructed by Olsson, but many of his conclusions were questioned by Ödman, who carried out an extensive study of its origins in his dissertation of 1987.[96] His findings too have since been questioned.[97] Unfortunately the building history of the castle is still uncertain, although the old north-west fortification wall and the greater part of the north-eastern wall remain under the new palace and are well-documented.[98] Olsson's reconstruction of the plan of the late medieval castle is still largely accepted. According to him, the northern walls were part of an almost rectangular outer bailey, which had square towers (not flanking towers) at each corner. As Ödman observed, this bailey could have functioned as a market place and included residences for tradesmen and craftsmen. The south-west wall was irregular in plan. To the

[94] Ödman 1987 pp. 84–86.
[95] Lovén 1996 p. 88. Ödman's theory is also disputed by Kerstin Söderlund: Söderlund 2001 p. 163.
[96] Ödman 1987 pp. 157–175.
[97] Olsson 1940 pp. 31–58. There are problems with the cultural layers identified by Olsson, and the oldest layer under the north-west wall was poorly researched.
[98] Olsson 1940 p. 36. Although many of his conclusions have been disputed, his documentation of finds is still valuable.

south of this, on slightly higher ground, was the smaller main castle. It had a square plan, its south-west wall was covered by the south-west tower of the outer fort and its north-east wall was flanked by part of the south-east wall of the outer bailey. On its own south-east corner was a large flanking tower, and the round tower stood in the middle of its courtyard. The only access to the main castle was via a gatehouse in the north that led to the outer bailey. Later buildings were constructed against the north-west and north east walls of the outer bailey, and weaker defences added outside the north-east wall of the main castle (adjoining the outer bailey wall) and round the southern and western sides of both it and the outer fort. In terms of the thickness of the walls facing the sea, five and a half metres, Stockholm, in its final form, was the realm's strongest castle. It is now doubtful, however, that the rectangular plan of the castle existed before the fourteenth century.

Ödman postulated three building phases in the building of the castle, arguing that the outer walls were strengthened after being built. On the basis that the main castle had no connection to the sea without the outer bailey and was therefore unlikely to have been built before it, Olsson believed that both were built together. This does not necessarily follow, and it is also possible that the outer (sea) walls were built at a different time from the inner bailey. The location of parts of the castle that have disappeared is in any case uncertain. Ödman dated the castle to the late thirteenth century, based partly on a re-examination of the earliest excavated material, but Lovén has pointed out that no cultural layer was uncontaminated. He assigned the building of the outer walls to the third quarter of the thirteenth century.[99] However, on the basis of archaeological excavations of the north-west corner of the castle and the outer bailey, Söderlund has pointed out that no building remains dated earlier than the middle of the fourteenth century have been found close to the curtain wall, nor has any earlier occupation layer against it been uncovered, and the large outer bailey walls were therefore probably built in the early fourteenth century. The *kastal* tower and associated stone buildings may still have been integral parts of the castle's outer defences even in the late thirteenth century.[100]

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[99] Reconstructions of the original castle appear in Olsson 1940 and Lovén 1996 pp. 87–89.

[100] Söderlund 2001 pp. 164–66.

The growth of city defences is extremely difficult to trace. According to Olaus Petri two towers were built first and the town placed between them.[101] These were probably Köpmanporten and Nikolai port, as Södertorn is not recorded until a century later. Beskow argues that this is all that existed in Birger Jarl's time, and suggests that Stadsholmen was naturally defensible. No walls are mentioned in *Erikskrönikan*, but this is not a reliable indicator. At the very least Birger Jarl provided the conditions for Stockholm to become an important city.

Tavastehus (Hämeenlinna, Finland)

Drake originally believed that this castle was founded in c. 1290, on the basis of its architecture, which he compares to that of Stockholm, although it is not mentioned until 1308.[102] It is uncertain, however, whether this source, telling of King Birger's donation of the castle to his brother Erik, is referring to the present site of the castle or Hakoinen, 15 kilometres to the south. Both Drake and the Schulzes assume that it referred to Hämeenlinna, and that this in turn meant that Hakoinen had been abandoned by then. The earliest fort at Hämeenlinna was almost square and constructed from granite stones with brick infill. Although there were towers in three corners, these were not flanking towers; hence Drake's dubious link to the castle of Stockholm. The walls, which had walkways, varied in height (due to the ground) between five and nine metres, and had only one gate. In view of the revised dating of Stockholm's curtain walls in the 1990s, Drake has since revised his dating of the construction of the fort at Hämeenlinna.

On the opposite shore to the fort was a trading site, Varikkoniemi, that was occupied between the eighth and fourteenth centuries.[103] Its excavators, Hans-Peter and Eeva-Liisa Schultz, identified a palisade round it, but this has been disputed. At some stage the settlement was burned. The Schulzes sought to link this with the raid of 1311 recounted in the Novgorod Chronicle, in which a *gorod* was burned, but the description of this, if not a stock literary device, corresponds more closely to Hakoinen. Another possibility is that it was aban-

[101] Olaus Petri p. 58.
[102] Drake 1968.
[103] E.-L. and H.-P. Schulz 1992. See also E.-L. Schulz 1992.

doned and subsequently destroyed when the new castle on the shore opposite became the centre for trading activity.

A.2.2.2. *Castles of unknown ownership or belonging to the secular nobility*

Årnäs

Årnäs or Aranäs appears in *Erikskrönikan* when Tyrgils Knutsson invites the brothers Birger, Erik and Valdemar to meet there in 1304.[104] On this basis the castle may be counted among those belonging to the nobility, but Tyrgils was effective regent from 1290 to 1304, and may have earlier acquired it from the king, as he appears to have acquired another residence formerly belonging to the *Folkungätten*, Lena, also in Västergötland.[105] Either way, it was seized by Erik and Valdemar after Tyrgils was imprisoned in 1305 and the *gård* subsequently donated to Gudhem nunnery. The castle, built on the end of a promontory, consists of a rectangular sandstone tower and a later curtain wall of sandstone, granite and brick, probably built at the same time when a ditch or moat was dug. It is not named in any source until the early fourteenth century, and is difficult to date. In their work published in 1927 Schnittger and Rydh dated the tower to the twelfth century on the grounds that its stonework resembled that of nearby churches, but they are themselves of uncertain date. Since the earliest finds date to the late thirteenth century, the tower was probably built between 1250 and 1290. Tyrgils Knutsson may have been responsible for the second building phase. He also owned a (probable) tower at Gum in the same province, donated to his wife when they married in 1303, which may have been built in the same period as Årnäs.[106]

Göksholm

Göksholm in Närke is named as a *curia* in a record of a family meeting of 1307 concerning Ingeborg Ulfsdotter's inheritance. Research into the building suggests that there was a fortified manor here in the late thirteenth century, a rectangular building with several rooms

[104] Ek p. 104.
[105] Lovén 1996 p. 277.
[106] Lovén 1996 p. 278.

which was expanded from an original tower.[107] Its location was not very defensible and nor was the castle particularly strongly built.

Gröneberg

At Gröneberg in Uppland a square tower of granite was built on an island, without any sign of brick. Remains of ditches and palisades were also found. According to Ericus Olai Joar Blå owned Gröneberg, the same noble who negotiated with Birger Jarl about Valdemar's election as king in *Erikskrönikan*.[108] However, Ericus Olai wrote over two hundred years after this event, and would not have known whether the castle existed in 1250 or not. The castle need not have been built by 1250, and if held by Joar Blå he may have held it from the crown.

Landsjö

In Östergötland one possible private castle of the thirteenth century has been identified, on an island in Landsjö lake. On the west side of the steep-sided hill on the island are the remains of a wall and possibly a north corner tower. A small part of a south wall remains, but no trace of any wall on the east side. Either it has disappeared entirely or there was none. The slope here is steep, but no more so than it is on the west. Although inaccessible slopes of hillforts were often left undefended by ramparts, this was rare in medieval castles and is unknown in castles of the Baltic region.[109] If the west wall was one face of a row of buildings this would also be an isolated example, so it was most likely part of a curtain wall. The wall contains brick, and the only period in which Landsjö is known to have been a manor is in the second half of the thirteenth century. It is named in Kristina Fastadotter's testament, of uncertain date but

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[107] Lovén 1996 p. 282. He bases his conclusions on those of Iwar Anderson.

[108] EOC 17, p. 76. In the seventeenth century several other sites were linked with Joar Blå, including Edeby (in Aspö in Södermanland) and Näbborg (Vårfrukyrka, Enköping): see Lovén 1996 pp. 389–90.

[109] Iron Age fortifications and Crusade Period forts in Finland sometimes had unfortified slopes, when these were considered sufficiently steep to be defensible without ramparts, but this was rare in Europe or the Christian kingdoms of the Middle East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was, however, common in contemporary Cilician Armenia, where castles such as Gülek, Maran and Rifatye were built at the top of truly inaccessible cliffs: see Edwards 1987 pp. 138–42, 187–89 and 206–08.

written between 1258 and 1282.[110] Whether the site was a manor when her husband Holmger, son of Folke Jarl, lived (he is not named after 1254) is not known.

Linnosaari (Häme, Finland)
On an island near Valkeakoski on the waterways of Häme a fort was built of wood, of which one piece was dated to c. 1225 (+/– 35).[111] Since finds included a crossbow bolt, this fort was probably a Swedish construction. It may only have been occupied for a short time, either during a Swedish occupation of Häme, or because of the Novgorodian threat. The fort was on an important communication route (and therefore invasion route) from the east to the interior of Häme, forty kilometres to the north-west of Hämeenlinna.

Öby kulle, 'Slottsholm'
In 1276 Magnus Ladulås sent two letters from 'the island of Norrbyås', and the same place was the source of a 1299 letter issued by a group of nobles, none of whom are known to have owned any *gård* in the area.[112] Lovén states that the island in question is undoubtedly Öby kulle, a high stony island in the sound south of Norrbyås church in Närke. The place was once called 'Slottsholm' and what was believed to be the remains of a defensible building were still there in the nineteenth century. There is not sufficient remaining to make any judgement on the date, size or precise nature of it now, but its location on an island on the waterway route from Svealand to Västergötland makes it a possible short-lived royal foundation of the thirteenth century.[113]

Östra Åros
Excavations suggest that there was a castle, or part of one, under the present site of the cathedral, but this is not mentioned in a single source. It may well have been a construction of Magnus Ladulås' period.[114] It is possible that it belonged to the king, or to the Archbishop of Uppsala.

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[110] According to DS 1766.
[111] Taavitsainen 1994 p. 168.
[112] DS 609, DS 586 and UUB perg 1/6. The place is called *nerboahs* in these, and *nærbøø* in the 1299 document.
[113] Lovén 1996 p. 82.
[114] Fritz 1972 p. 46.

Saxholm

The tower at Saxholmen (Ölme district, Värmland) is probably thirteenth-century, a clue to this being the discovery of a coin minted in the period 1210–1270. It was situated at the highest point of an island, and built from worked stone, although brick was found during excavation. Several wooden buildings existed nearby. Since clasps belonging to a garment with the arms of the Boberg family were found, Eva Svensson suggests that the castle was theirs. The family owned extensive lands in south-eastern Sweden (Småland and Österland), and during the late thirteenth century Lars Boberg was a councillor of the king. He also had an estate in southern Värmland near this castle.[115] The castle site is also near the sites of early manors, Hammar and Arnön, which appear to have had roots in the late Iron Age. Ölme was still dominated by the lands of secular nobles in the sixteenth century, unlike nearby areas. Saxholm was a household as well as castle, a reflection of the noble family based power structure in the thirteenth century. In an area with no large towns, it was also a craft production centre.[116]

Sille (Västerljung, Trosa)

On a promontory in Lake Sillen near the village of Sille there was a ruined structure that is not mentioned in any source, although Sigurd Rahmqvist believes that it might have been a strategically placed as a royal stronghold, and may have been constructed in the 1250s or 60s.[117] The promontory was defended by a ditch, which would have been a formidable obstacle if it had wooden defences behind it. It is uncertain whether this defensive feature dates from the same period as traces of buildings, which have been almost obliterated by ploughing.

Vågbro—Faxeholm

A hill in Hälsingland was defended by a ditch on its south side, and remains of a structure were found on its crown. Nearby there was a barrage and control system in Stäckfjärden, but this is not the same

[115] DS 1153 and 1212.

[116] Svensson 1996 p. 216. Eva Svensson and Susanne Pettersson supervised excavations at Saxholm.

[117] Josephson 1996 p. 231.

waterway that passes by Vågbro. The nearby *kungsgård* Hög is situated on yet another river. Nevertheless, all these defences could have been constructed to protect royal land. Dendrochronological datings from both varied from the end of the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Vågbro's most recent excavator, Mogren, believes this was a royal manor, which was, however, unfortified in the thirteenth century.[118]

Ymseborg

One of the few private castles which was recorded in writing in the thirteenth century is Ymseborg in Västergötland, whence Magnus Ladulås issued a letter in 1281.[119] After it reappears in a royal document of the following year it disappears from history.[120] *Erikskrönikan* relates how the castle was confiscated from the rebels Johan and Birger Filipsson in 1278.[121] The castle consisted of a tower of rhomboid plan with an outer wall, on a ridge near an important communication route.

A.2.2.3. *The fortified residences of the bishops*

Of more substantial size, if not stronger, were the fortified bishops' residences. All the diocesan seats had substantial defensible bishops' residences by 1300. In the late thirteenth-century *landskapslagar* and the regulations of the Skänninge and Alsnö statutes, the status and authority of the realm's bishops was lower only than that of the king and *hertigar*.

Husaby

Husaby near Skara was the site of a four-storey stone house in the late thirteenth century, approximately 15.5 metres square, which later became the centre of a larger fortified *gård*.[122] An episcopal letter was sent from Husaby in 1278, suggesting that the tower was inhabited by then.[123]

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[118] See Mogren 1994a pp. 77–81, and 2000.
[119] DS 717.
[120] DS 744.
[121] Ek pp. 63–64.
[122] Ekre 1985 p. 221.
[123] DS 655.

Linköping

In 1278 a bishop's 'mansionem' at Linköping is mentioned in a papal letter.[124] There was an early twelfth-century rectangular cellar in the south-west corner of the later castle, possibly belonging to an early wooden tower. A rectangular building was later built to its north, and subsequently incorporated into the west side of the present castle. It had two storeys, the upper one being a hall. Third and fourth storeys constructed of brick were added at a later stage, probably in the fourteenth century. The place was a residence, but not very defensible before the fourteenth century.[125]

Tynnelsö

Tynnelsö was the site of the palace of the Bishop of Strängnäs on Lake Mälaren. The bishop sent a letter from this *manerium* in 1282, this being the first evidence of its existence.[126] The lower part of the building, a rectangular brick structure, had been erected by the end of the thirteenth century, and was built in a similar style to Strängnäs cathedral.[127] Records do not give a clear indication of whether it was considered a manor, bishop's seat or castle. It was not obviously a castle, and there are no written records of early construction. However, an inventory of 1443 makes it clear that it was defended at that time.

A.2.2.4. *Royal palaces*

Alsnö

Alsnö palace is known to have existed in 1200, when King Sverker II mentioned it in a letter. The main building excavated by Thordemann was clearly built later, although two wooden buildings, one of substantial size, lay to the west of this. If it was at all comparable with the building of the Folkung period, the Alsnö of the early thirteenth century must have had a symbolic value as a rep-

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[124] DS 74.

[125] Lovén 1996 pp. 245–46. His account of the early structures is based largely on Bengt Cnattingius's account of his own archaeological research, published in 1936.

[126] DS 747.

[127] Lovén 1996 p. 255.

resentation of royal power and wealth. The later palace was a rectangular building with a smaller entrance room on the south, and was constructed mostly of brick. It had two levels, the upper one being a large hall with finely decorated arches. To the west lay two wooden buildings. This ornamentation and comparisons with nearby churches led Thordemann to date its construction to the 1270s.[128] The building was later surrounded by a dry ditch and palisade, but these may be fortifications belonging to the period when Albrecht of Mecklenburg (1263–89) was at war with Margrete, since coins of Albrecht were found in the ditch. This war resulted in its final destruction.

Lena

Although few remains of a thirteenth-century palace have been found, there is written evidence that one existed here (now Kungs-Lena). Hakon Häkonson was entertained there by Birger Jarl and King Valdemar, a letter was sent from there in 1267, and Bengt Birgersson donated the place to Linköping cathedral in his testament.[129] Tyrgils Knutsson was seized there in 1305, according to *Erikskrönikan*, and may have owned it then.[130] Remains of walls were of brick and granite, and an underground channel had been constructed to lead excess water from the slope on which they were built. Both the site and the remains indicate that the building was not a fortification.[131]

Vadstena

Vadstena is first recorded in 1268, in a letter sent by Birger Jarl's half-brother (possibly brother) Elof. In 1275 Valdemar called a meeting there, and a *fogde* was based there in the following year. According to a sixteenth-century source, the land was inherited, rather than being crown land. The building was of two storeys with a cellar under the west end, its ground level with an arch under the ceiling. Anderson, its first researcher, estimated that the building work was from the 1250s or '60s on the basis of comparison with similar buildings. The whole structure was incorporated in the fourteenth-century abbey.

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[128] Thordeman 1920.
[129] DS 941 (1287).
[130] Ek p. 109.
[131] Anderson and Bergman 1960, p. 15; Lovén 1996 p. 106.

Kings and Regents of Sweden 1130–1350

Magnus Nielsen	King	c. 1130–1132	D	d
Sverker (the Elder)	King	c. 1132–1156	S	u
Erik Jedvardsson (St Erik)	King	c. 1156–1160	E	u
Magnus Henriksen	King	c. 1160–1161	D	u
Karl Sverkersson	King	c. 1161–1167	S	u
Knut Eriksson	King	c. 1167–1195/96	E	n
Sverker (the Younger) Karlsson	King	c. 1196–1208	S	u
Erik Knutsson	King	1208–1216	E	n
Johan Sverkersson	King	1216–1222	S	n
Erik Eriksson 'Läspe och halte' ('Lisper and limper')	King	1222–1229	E	d
Knut Holmgersson 'Långe' ('the Tall')	King	1229–c. 1234	E	n?
Erik Eriksson 'Läspe och halte'	King	1234–1250	E	n
Valdemar Birgersson	King	1250–1275	F	d
Magnus Birgersson 'Ladulås' ('Barnlock')	King	1275–1290	F	n
Tyrgils Knutsson	*Marsk*	1290–1304	u	
Birger Magnusson	King	1290–1318	F	d
Mats Ketilmundsson	*Drots*	1318–1319	–	
Magnus Eriksson	King	1319–1364	F	d

S = *Sverkerska ätten*
E = *Erikska ätten*
F = *Folkungaätten*
D = Danish

n = natural death
u = 'unnatural' death, murdered or killed in battle
d = driven from throne

Jarls (of the *svear* and *götar*) c. 1160–1266

Guttorm?	mid-twelfth century	d	
Birger Bengtsson 'Brosa' ('the Smiling')	c. 1174–1202	F	n
Johan Sverkersson?*	1202–1208?	S	
Knut Birgersson	1202–1208, or 1208	F	u
Folke Birgersson	1208–1210	F	u
Karl Magnusson 'Döve' ('the Deaf')	1210–1220	F	u
Ulf Karlsson 'Fase'	1220?-1248	F	n
Birger Magnusson (Birger Jarl)	1248–1266	F	n

* one-year old son of King Sverker the Younger, appointed either king or jarl

GLOSSARY

	DEFINITE SINGULAR	(INDEFINITE) PLURAL	TRANSLATION
å	ån	åar	river
allmänning	allmänningen	allmänningar	common (e.g. *land*—land)
allmänningsore	allmänningsoren	–	tax on households
allmänningsrätt	allmänningsrätten	allmänningsrätter	common rights or law
åra (ar, har)	åran	åror	administrative unit (from *oar*)
årman (Nor)	årman	årmenn	supervisor of a Norwegian royal estate
ätt (Nor. ætt)	ätten	ätter	kin, family
åtting	åttingen	åttingar	eighth (administrative district)
attung	attungen	attungar	eighth (measurement of land area)
avrad	avraden	avrader	rent for land
balk	balken	balker	section of the *landskapslagar*
bo	bo	boen/bon	place-name component, in Götaland sometimes signifying an administrative centre
bogård	bogården	bogårdar	(ancient?) Götaland administrative centre
bolby	bolbyn	bolbyar	area of settled land
bonde	bonden	bönder	(free) farmer, householder
borg	borgen	borgar	castle
by	byn	byar	village
bygd	bygden	bygder	Settlement, settlement district
domare	domaren	domare	judge or chairperson in district courts or assemblies
dreng/dræng (OSw)	drengen	drengar	landowner who owed military and possibly

Table (*cont.*)

	DEFINITE SINGULAR	(INDEFINITE) PLURAL	TRANSLATION
			other service to an overlord
drots	drotsen	drotsar	royal official with military responsibilities
druzhina (Rus, Pol)			prince's or king's military retinue
edgärdsman	edgärdsmannen	edgärdsmän	oath-giver (usually on behalf of a defendant) in the judicial process
edsöresbrott	edsöresbrotten	edsöresbrottar	law concerning breaches of the king's peace
eriksgata	eriksgatan	–	route through the realm taken by a new king
fäste	fästet	fäste	stronghold, castle
fjärding	fjärdingen	fjärdingar	fourth or farthing, administrative unit
flock	flocken	flockar	subdivision of a *balk* in the law-codes
fogde	fogden	fogdar	governor of a town or city
folkland	folklandet	folkland	territorial division of Uppland
frälse	frälset		those exempt from payment of taxes to the Crown (cf. verb *frälsa*—to redeem, save)
frid	friden	-	"peace", freedom from the king's exactions
gård	gården	gårdar	farm, estate
gästning	gästningen	gästningar	right of hospitality for the king, his agents, or for a lord, in households on their lands
gata	gatan	gator	street, way, route
gengärd	gengärden	–	tax on households
goði (Isl)		goðar	chieftain, noble
Götar (pl.)		götar	inhabitants of Götaland
gren	grenen	grenar	branch

Table (*cont.*)

	DEFINITE SINGULAR	(INDEFINITE) PLURAL	TRANSLATION
hamna	hamnan	hamnor	administrative unit (from harbour?)
haga			crown estate
härad (Dan. *herred*)	häradet	härader	administrative division of a *landskap* in Södermanland and Götaland
hertig (Dan *hertug*, Ger *herzog*)	hertigen	hertigar	duke, jarl
hird (ON, Isl, OSw *hirð*)	hirden	hirder	warband or retinue, followers of king, noble or (earlier) chieftain
hövding	hövdingen	hövdingar	chief, leader
hövetsman	hövetsmannen	hövetsmän	head of district or castle
hundare	hundaret	hundare	administrative division of a *land(skap)* north of Mälaren (cf. English *hundred*)
hund	hunden	hunder	hypothetical ancient administrative division
hus	huset	hus	house(hold), castle
husaby	husabyn	husabyar	place-name or component of place-name, administrative or craft centre on royal land
inländing	inländingen	inländingar	possibly a tax levied on king's accession, perhaps originally a restoration of favour to those outside the king's law (cf. OSw *utlendr*, outlaw)
jord	jorden	jordar	earth, land
jordebok	jordeboken	jordeböcker	land register
jordetal	jordetalet	jordetal	land valuation for taxation purposes
kanik	kaniken	kaniker	canon
kansler	kanslern	kanslerer	chancellor
kastal	kastalen	kastaler	free-standing fortified tower

Table (*cont.*)

	DEFINITE SINGULAR	(INDEFINITE) PLURAL	TRANSLATION
kastell	kastellet	kastell	fort, castle
knap	knapen	knapar	soldier in the service of the nobility
krönika	krönikan	krönikor	chronicle
konung (OSw)	konungen	konungar	king
kung	kungen	kungar	king
kyrka	kyrkan	kyrkor	church
lag (Nor, Dan *lov*)	lagen	lagar	law
lagman	lagmannen	lagmän	lit. *lawman*, or 'lawspeaker'—head administrator of justice in each *landskap*, who also acquired other administrative responsibilities
landbo	landbon	landbor	rent paying tenant farmer
landskap	landskapet	landskap	main regions of Sweden
länsman	länsmannen	länsmän	administrative head of a *län*
ledung (Dan *leding*, Nor *leidang*)	ledungen		naval fleet levy and later tax
ledungslama	ledungslaman	–	payment in lieu of military fleet service
lið, liþ (ON, Isl, OSw)	liðen	liðar	noble's military following or household
måg (OSw *maghe*)	mågen	mågar	son-in-law
mantal	mantalet	mantal	measure of number of people for tax assessment
markland	marklandet	markland	land division for sale, exchange or taxation
marsk	marsken	marskar	marshall, title of a leading member of the king's household or council who had military responsibilities
nämnd	nämnden	nämnder	commission, committee of jurors, law court
oäkta (verb)			inactive

Table (*cont.*)

	DEFINITE SINGULAR	(INDEFINITE) PLURAL	TRANSLATION
riddare	riddaren	riddare	knight
rike	riket	riken	realm
sjätting	sjättingen	sjättingar	sixth, administrative sub-division of Gotland
skänkare	skänkaren	skänkarna	'cupbearer' or 'butler', member of a king's, noble's or chieftain's *hird* or retinue. Later a title of one who served in the king's council
skatt	skatten	skatter	tax
skepp	skeppet	skepp	ship
skeppslag	skeppslagen	skeppslagar	administrative subdivision in certain areas
skeppvist	skeppvisten	skeppvister	tax
skinn	skinnet	skinn	fur
släkt (Dan *slægt*)	släkten	släkter	family, king-group
slott	slottet	slott	castle
socken (Nor, Dan *sogn*)	socknen	socknar	parish
solskifte	solskiftet	(solskiften)	lit. *sun-division*, division of fields into strips, according to which the farmer who lived nearest to the east had the easternmost strip, and so on.
stadga	stadgan	stadgor	statute
ställare	ställaren	ställarna	'housekeeper', member of a king's, noble's or chieftain's *hird* or retinue, later a title of a member of the king's council
stift	stiftet	stift	diocese
stormannagård	stormannagården	stormannagårdar	estate, manor
styrman	styrmannen	styrmän	helmsman, master of a ship
svear (pl.)		svear	inhabitants of Svealand

Table (*cont.*)

	DEFINITE SINGULAR	(INDEFINITE) PLURAL	TRANSLATION
sven	svennen	svenner	soldier in the service of a noble
syssla (Nor, Dan *sysle*)	sysslan (*syslen*)	sysslor (*sysler*)	administrative district
sysleman (Nor)	syslemannen	syslemenn	administrative head of a Norwegian *sysle*
tegn/þegn (OSw), (OE *thegn*)	tegnen	tegner	landowner who owed military and possibly other service to an overlord
ting (OSw *þing*, *thing*)	tinget	ting	district court or meeting place
tionde	tionden	tionder	tithe
tolft	tolften	tolfter	twelfth, administrative sub-division, type of *socken*
tomt	tomten	tomter	plot of land belonging to household
torp	torpet	torp	farming plot or village whose inhabitants paid a specified rent to the landholder
treding	tredingen	tredingar	third, administrative division
tuna			place-name component, probably sites of ancient cult or "administrative" centres
vakt	vakten	vakter	watch, guard (n.)
väpen	väpnen	väpnar	weapon, (heraldic) arms
väpnare	väpnaren	väpnare	mounted soldier, often armoured and of noble stock
visthus	visthuset	visthus	building or complex in which provisions for the king or his agents were stored
vitsord	vitsordet	vitsord	initial judgement in a judicial case, which was upheld if not disproved

Finnish words

NOMINATIVE SINGULAR	NOMINATIVE PLURAL	
hiisi	hiidet	spirit, demon, devil
joki	joet	river
linna	linnat	castle
kalmisto	kalmistot	cemetery
kihlakunta (Estonian *kihelkond*)	kihlakunnat	originally hostage-giving or tribute-paying group/district, later 'parish'
kunta	kunnat	group of people, society
kirkko	kirkot	church
krok*		'plough' (medieval tax)
kylä	kylät	village
maa	maat	land, earth
mäkilinna	mäkilinnat	hill-fort
moisio	moisiot	manor, possibly equivalent of a Swedish *gård*
muinaislinna	muinaislinnat	lit. ancient fort, hill-fort
pitäjä	pitäjät	parish
ristiretki	ristiretket	crusade
rök*		'smoke' (medieval tax)
satama	satamat	harbour
tie	tiet	road, way
vartio	vartiot	watch

* words of Swedish derivation, but taxes levied in Österland (Finland)

GENEALOGICAL TABLES

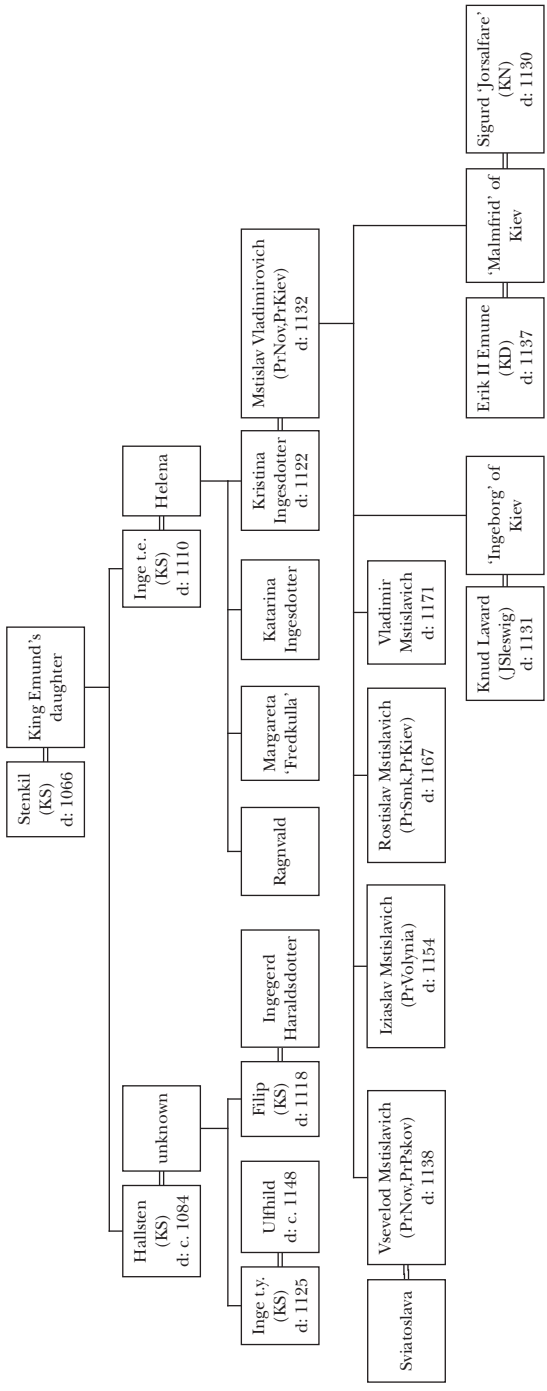
Abbreviations

Ft = Furst
Gf = Graf
Hg = Herzog (Ger.), Hertug (Dan.), Hertig (Sw.)
JS = Jarl of Sweden
JN = Jarl of Norway
KD = King of Denmark
KF = King of France
KN = King of Norway
KS = King of Sweden
Nov = Novgorod
Pr = Prince
Smk = Smolensk
t.e. = the Elder
t.y. = the Younger
* (after the name) = doubtful marriage or relationship, or possible alternative

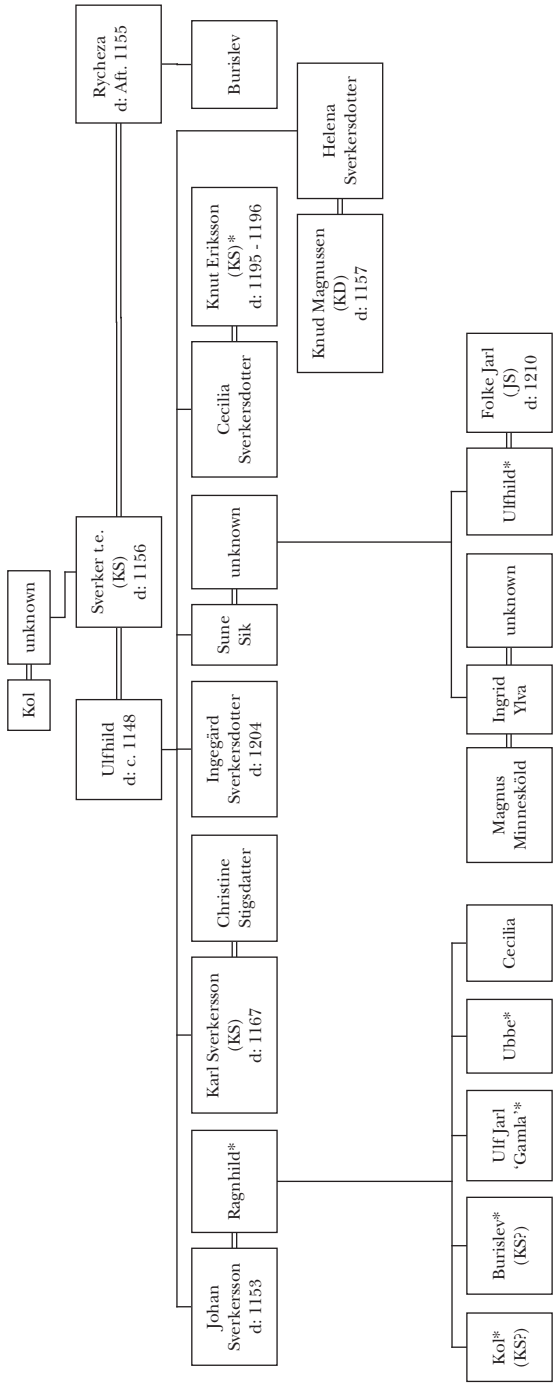
Not everything in these tables is certain, even some of those relationships that are not marked *—they should be used in conjunction with Appendix 1, which handles the many problems associated with the genealogies of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Swedish noble families.

Descendants of Stenkil (1)

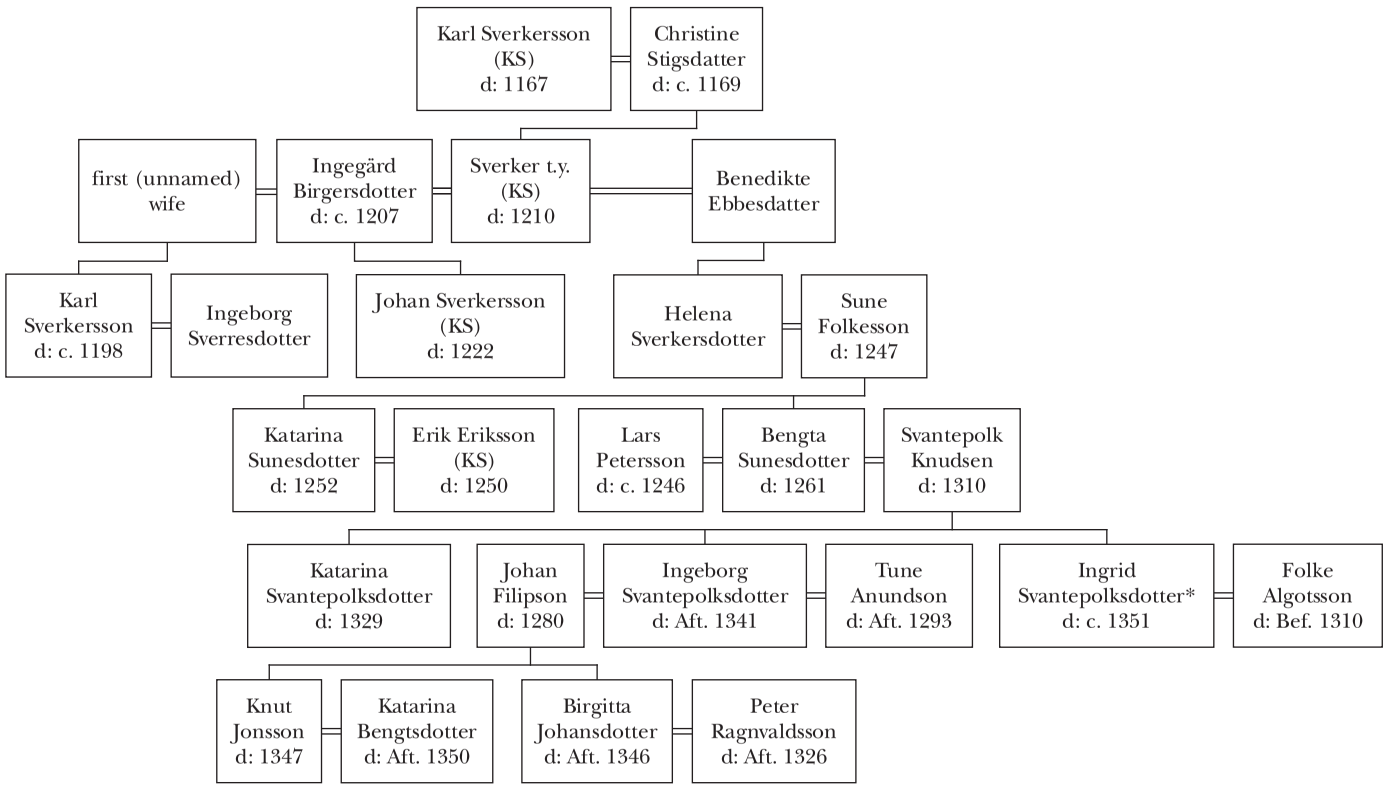
Descendants of Stenkil (2)



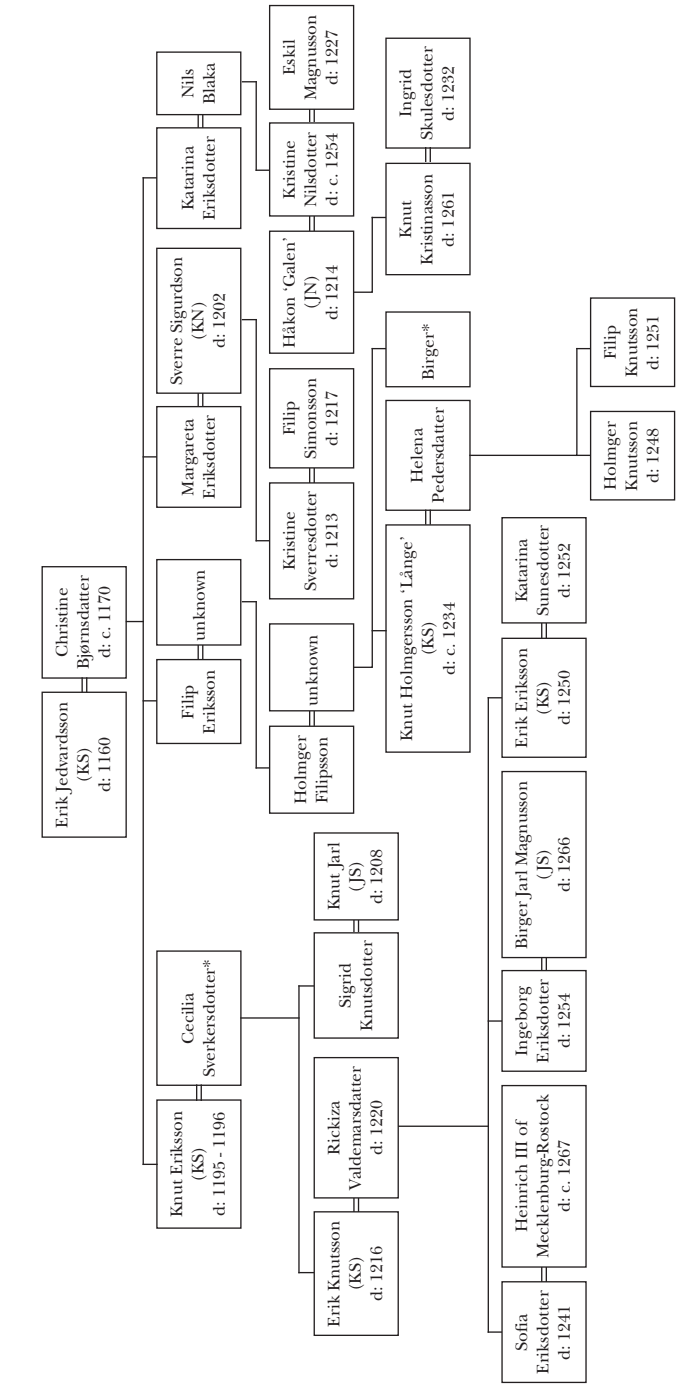
Descendants of King Sverker the Elder



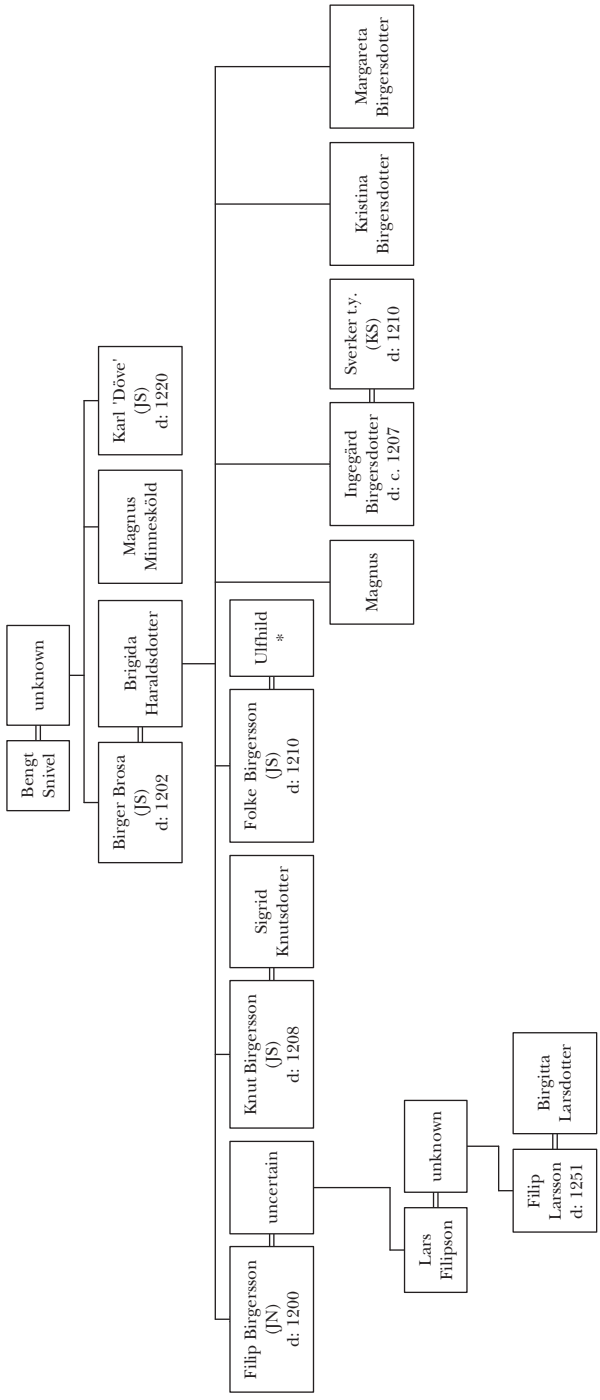
Descendants of King Karl Sverkersson


Karl Sverkersson (KS) d: 1167
Christine Stigsdatter d: c. 1169
first (unnamed) wife
Ingegärd Birgersdotter d: c. 1207
Sverker t.y. (KS) d: 1210
Benedikte Ebbesdatter
Karl Sverkersson d: c. 1198
Ingeborg Sverresdotter
Johan Sverkersson (KS) d: 1222
Helena Sverkersdotter
Sune Folkesson d: 1247
Katarina Sunesdotter d: 1252
Erik Eriksson (KS) d: 1250
Lars Petersson d: c. 1246
Bengta Sunesdotter d: 1261
Svantepolk Knudsen d: 1310
Katarina Svantepolksdotter d: 1329
Johan Filipson d: 1280
Ingeborg Svantepolksdotter d: Aft. 1341
Tune Anundson d: Aft. 1293
Ingrid Svantepolksdotter* d: c. 1351
Folke Algotsson d: Bef. 1310
Knut Jonsson d: 1347
Katarina Bengtsdotter d: Aft. 1350
Birgitta Johansdotter d: Aft. 1346
Peter Ragnvaldsson d: Aft. 1326

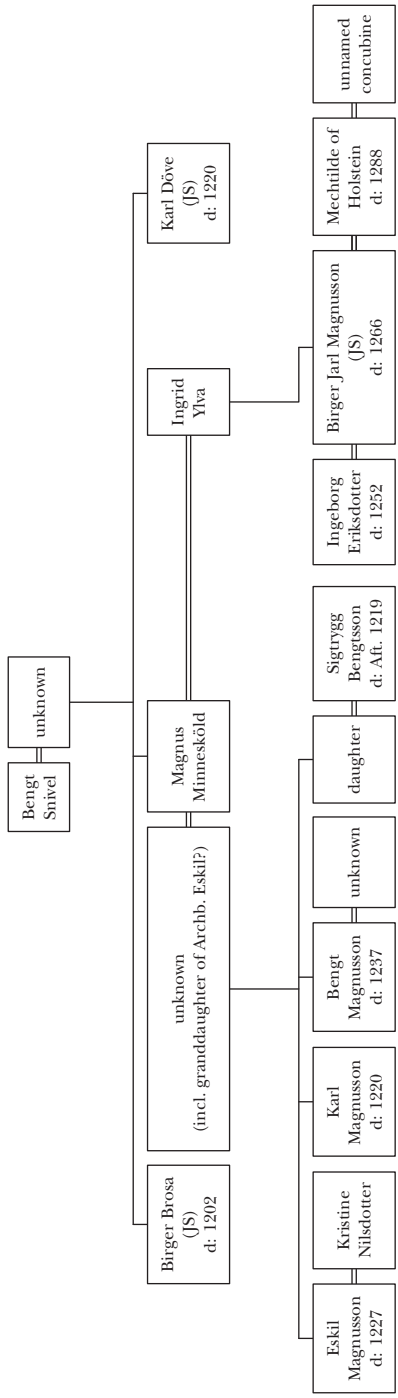
Descendants of King Erik Jedvardsson (St Erik)



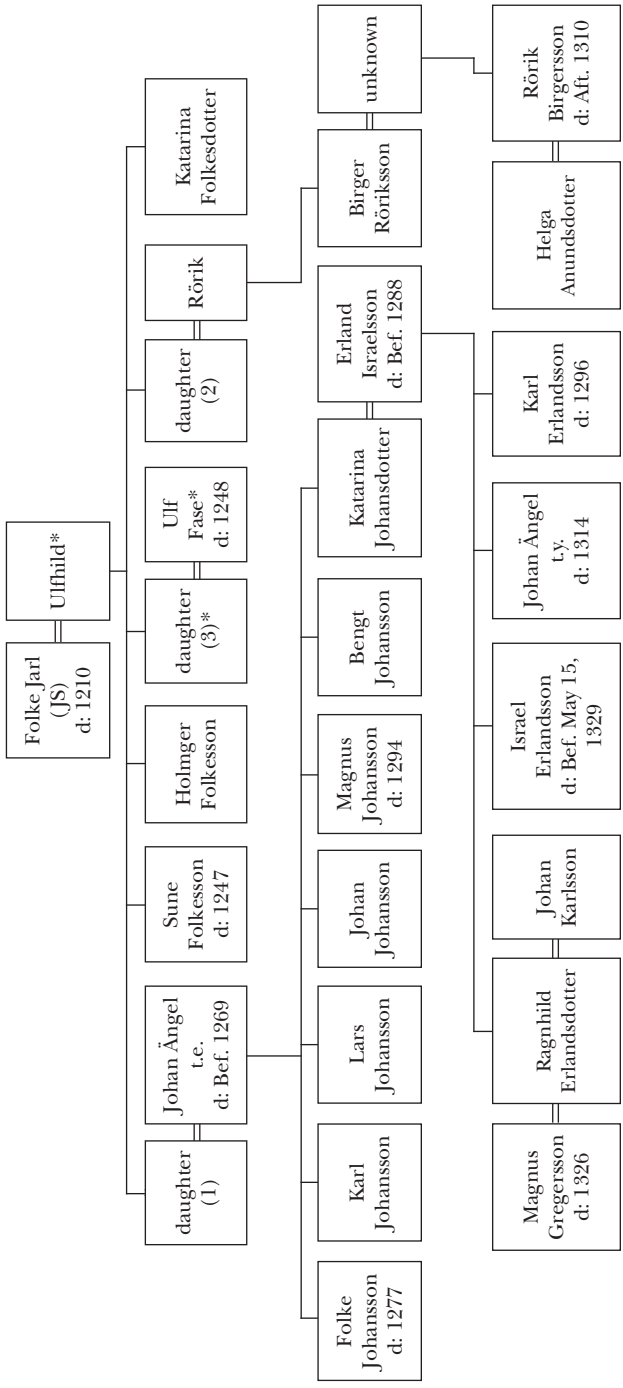
Descendants of Bengt Snivel (1)



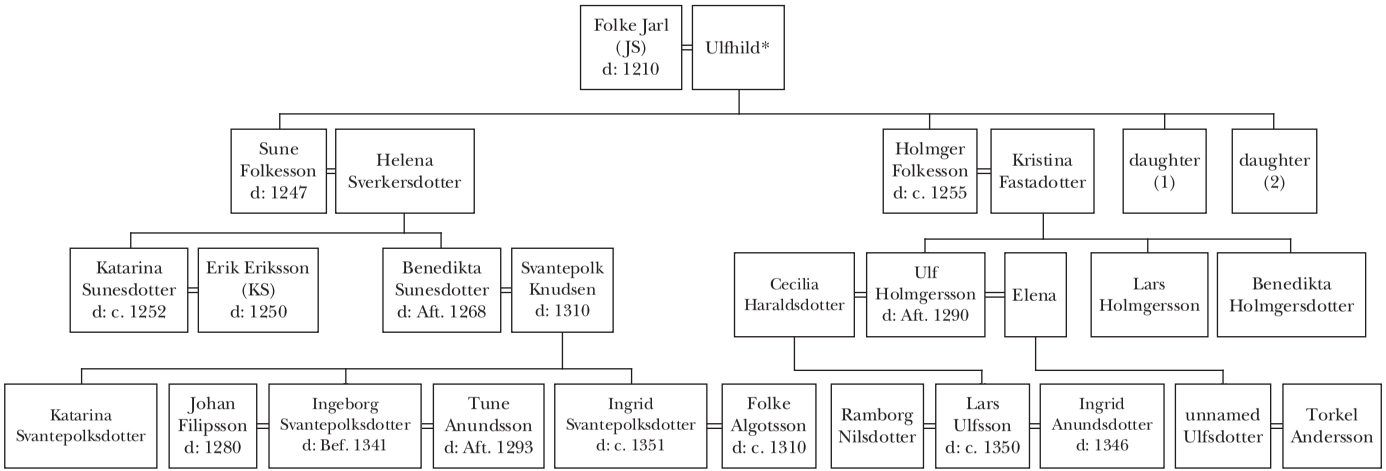
Descendants of Bengt Snivel (2)



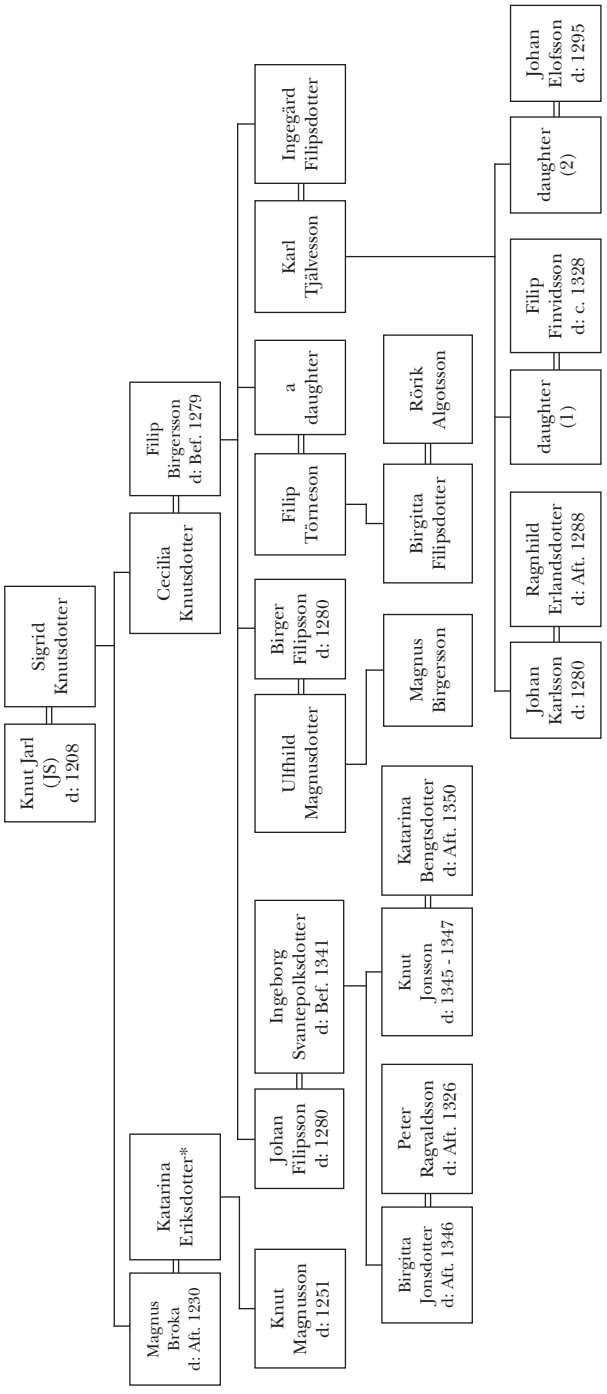
Descendants of Folke Jarl (1)



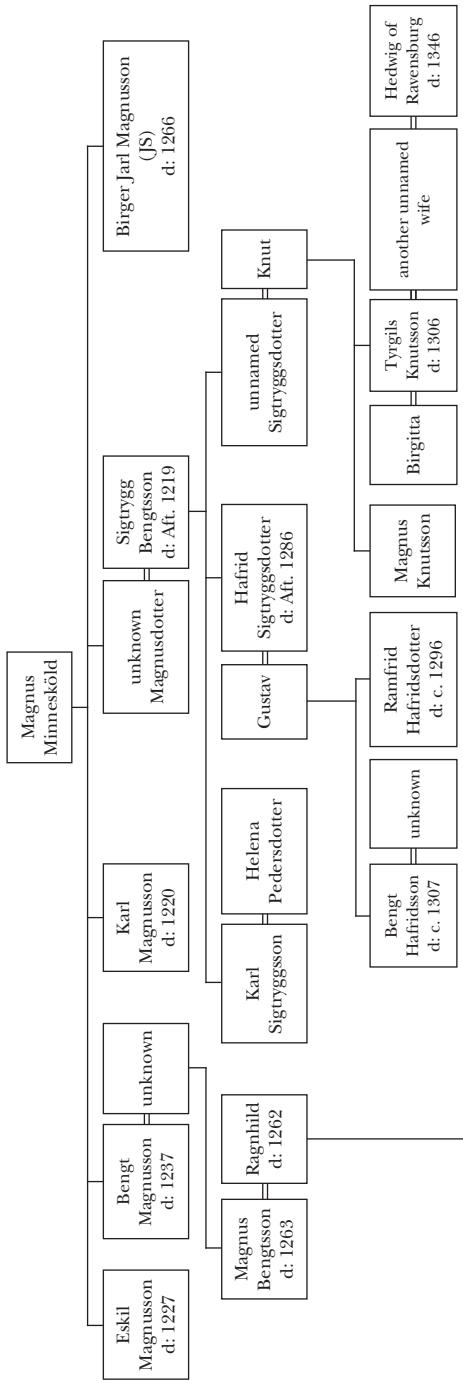
Descendants of Folke Jarl (2)



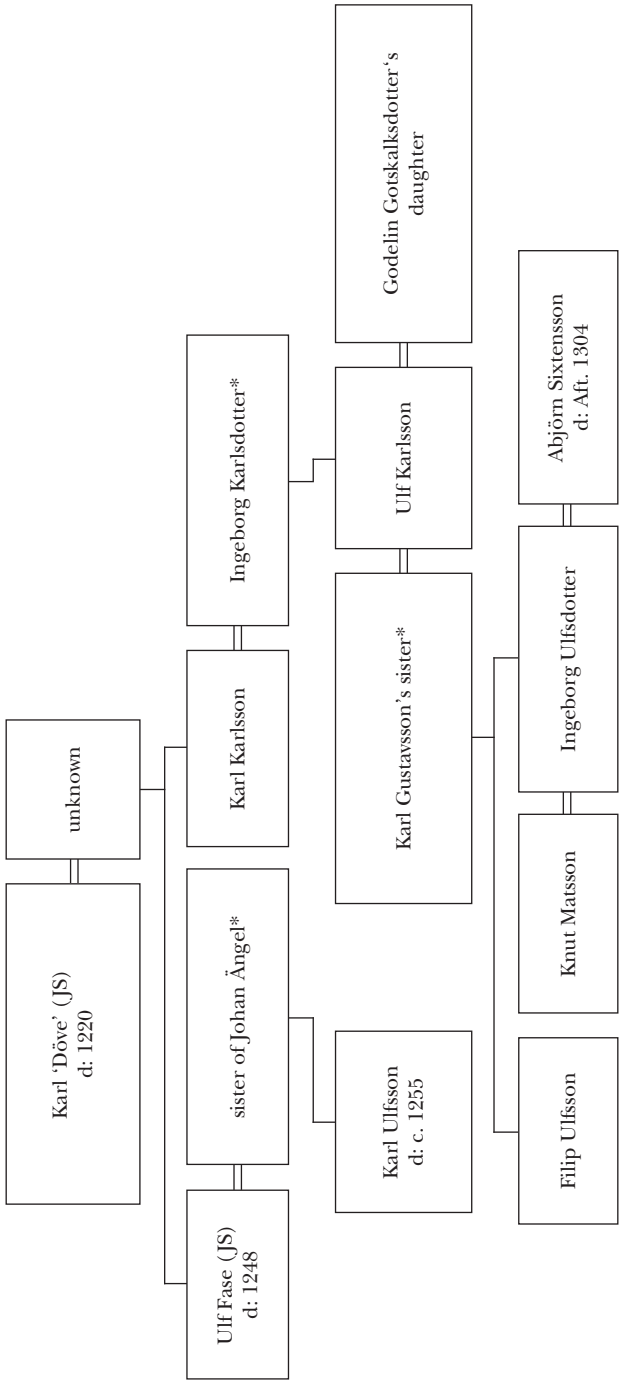
Descendants of Knut Jarl



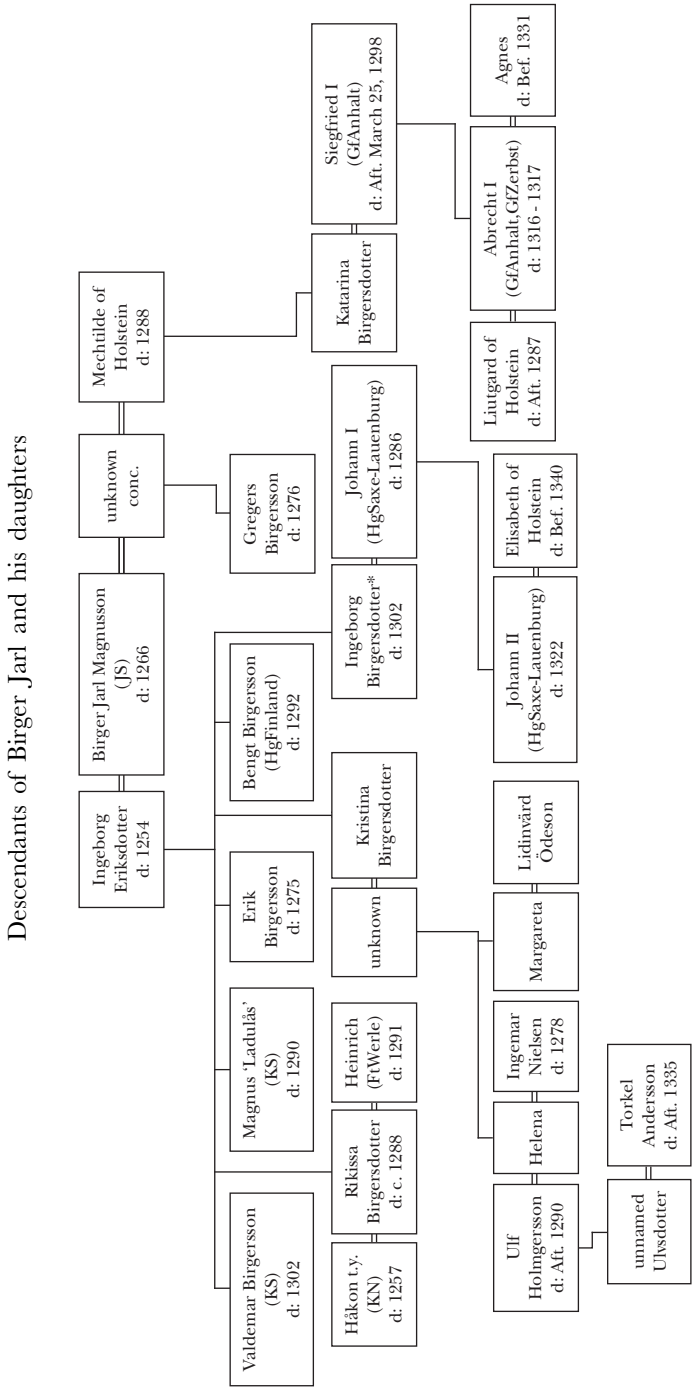
Descendants of Bishop Bengt Magnusson and descendants of Magnus Minnesköld's unnamed daughter



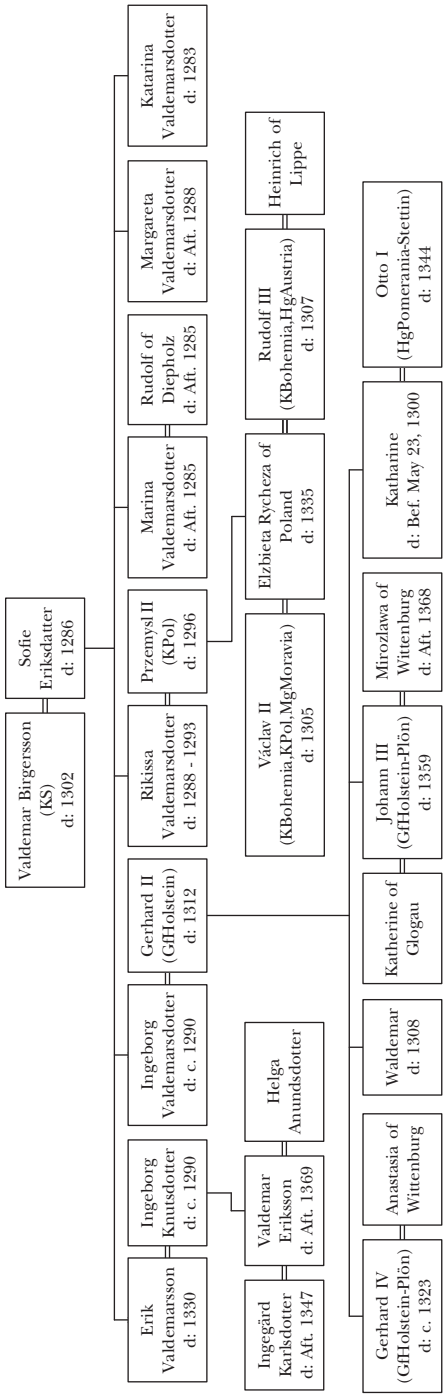
Descendants of Karl 'Döve' (JS)



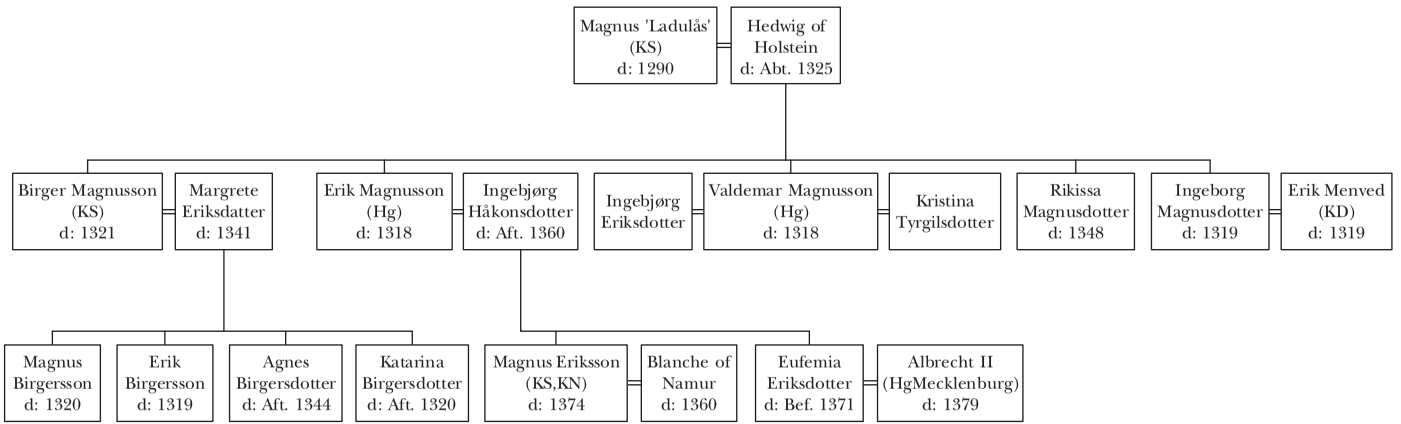
Descendants of Birger Jarl and his daughters


Ingeborg Eriksdotter d: 1254
Birger Jarl Magnusson (JS) d: 1266
unknown conc.
Mechtilde of Holstein d: 1288
Gregers Birgersson d: 1276
Katarina Birgersdotter
Siegfried I (GfAnhalt) d: Aft. March 25, 1298
Agnes d: Bef. 1331
Abrecht I (GfAnhalt,GfZerbst) d: 1316 - 1317
Liutgard of Holstein d: Aft. 1287
Valdemar Birgersson (KS) d: 1302
Magnus 'Ladulås' (KS) d: 1290
Erik Birgersson d: 1275
Bengt Birgersson (HgFinland) d: 1292
Ingeborg Birgersdotter* d: 1302
Johann I (HgSaxe-Lauenburg) d: 1286
Elisabeth of Holstein d: Bef. 1340
Johann II (HgSaxe-Lauenburg) d: 1322
Håkon t.y. (KN) d: 1257
Rikissa Birgersdotter d: c. 1288
Heinrich (FtWerle) d: 1291
unknown
Kristina Birgersdotter
Lidinvärd Ödeson
Margareta
Ingemar Nielsen d: 1278
Helena
Ulf Holmgersson d: Aft. 1290
Torkel Andersson d: Aft. 1335
unnamed Ulvsdotter

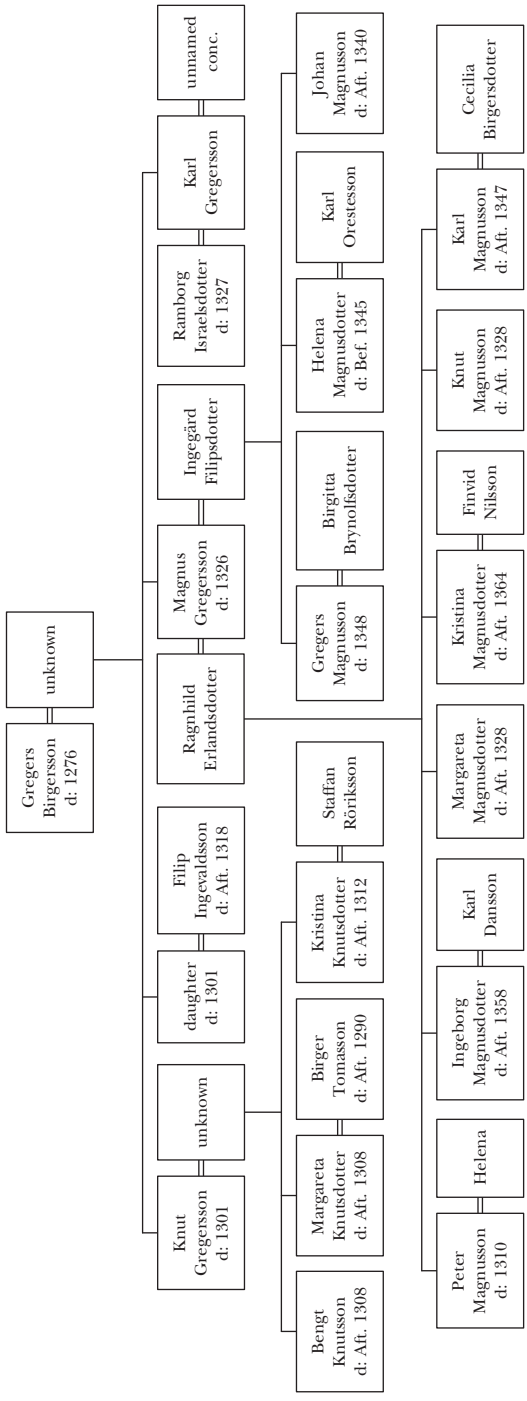
Descendants of King Valdemar Birgersson


Valdemar Birgersson (KS) d: 1302
Sofie Eriksdatter d: 1286
Erik Valdemarsson d: 1330
Ingeborg Knutsdotter d: c. 1290
Ingeborg Valdemarsdotter d: c. 1290
Gerhard II (GfHolstein) d: 1312
Rikissa Valdemarsdotter d: 1288 - 1293
Przemysl II (KPol) d: 1296
Marina Valdemarsdotter d: Aft. 1285
Rudolf of Diepholz d: Aft. 1285
Margareta Valdemarsdotter d: Aft. 1288
Katarina Valdemarsdotter d: 1283
Ingegärd Karlsdotter d: Aft. 1347
Valdemar Eriksson d: Aft. 1369
Helga Anundsdotter
Václav II (KBohemia,KPol,MgMoravia) d: 1305
Elzbieta Rycheza of Poland d: 1335
Rudolf III (KBohemia,HgAustria) d: 1307
Heinrich of Lippe
Gerhard IV (GfHolstein-Plön) d: c. 1323
Anastasia of Wittenburg
Waldemar d: 1308
Katherine of Glogau
Johann III (GfHolstein-Plön) d: 1359
Mirozlawa of Wittenburg d: Aft. 1368
Katharine d: Bef. May 23, 1300
Otto I (HgPomerania-Stettin) d: 1344

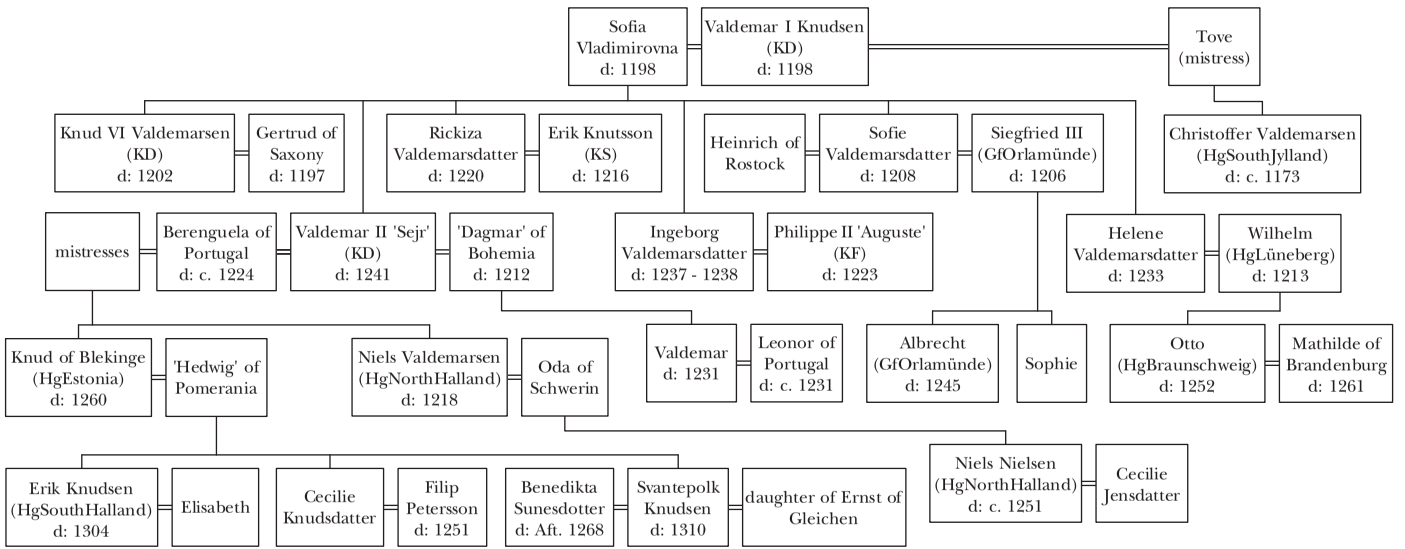
Descendants of King Magnus Ladulås


Magnus 'Ladulås' (KS) d: 1290
Hedwig of Holstein d: Abt. 1325
Birger Magnusson (KS) d: 1321
Margrete Eriksdatter d: 1341
Erik Magnusson (Hg) d: 1318
Ingebjørg Håkonsdotter d: Aft. 1360
Ingebjørg Eriksdotter
Valdemar Magnusson (Hg) d: 1318
Kristina Tyrgilsdotter
Rikissa Magnusdotter d: 1348
Ingeborg Magnusdotter d: 1319
Erik Menved (KD) d: 1319
Magnus Birgersson d: 1320
Erik Birgersson d: 1319
Agnes Birgersdotter d: Aft. 1344
Katarina Birgersdotter d: Aft. 1320
Magnus Eriksson (KS,KN) d: 1374
Blanche of Namur d: 1360
Eufemia Eriksdotter d: Bef. 1371
Albrecht II (HgMecklenburg) d: 1379

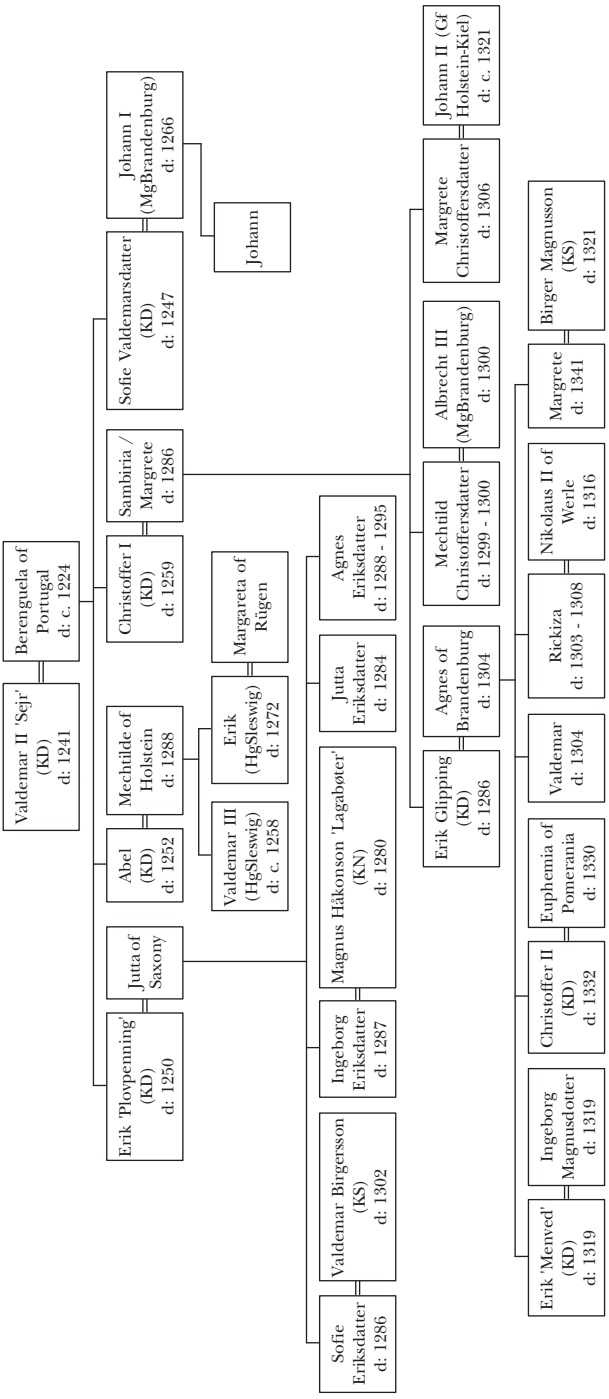
Descendants of Gregers Birgersson



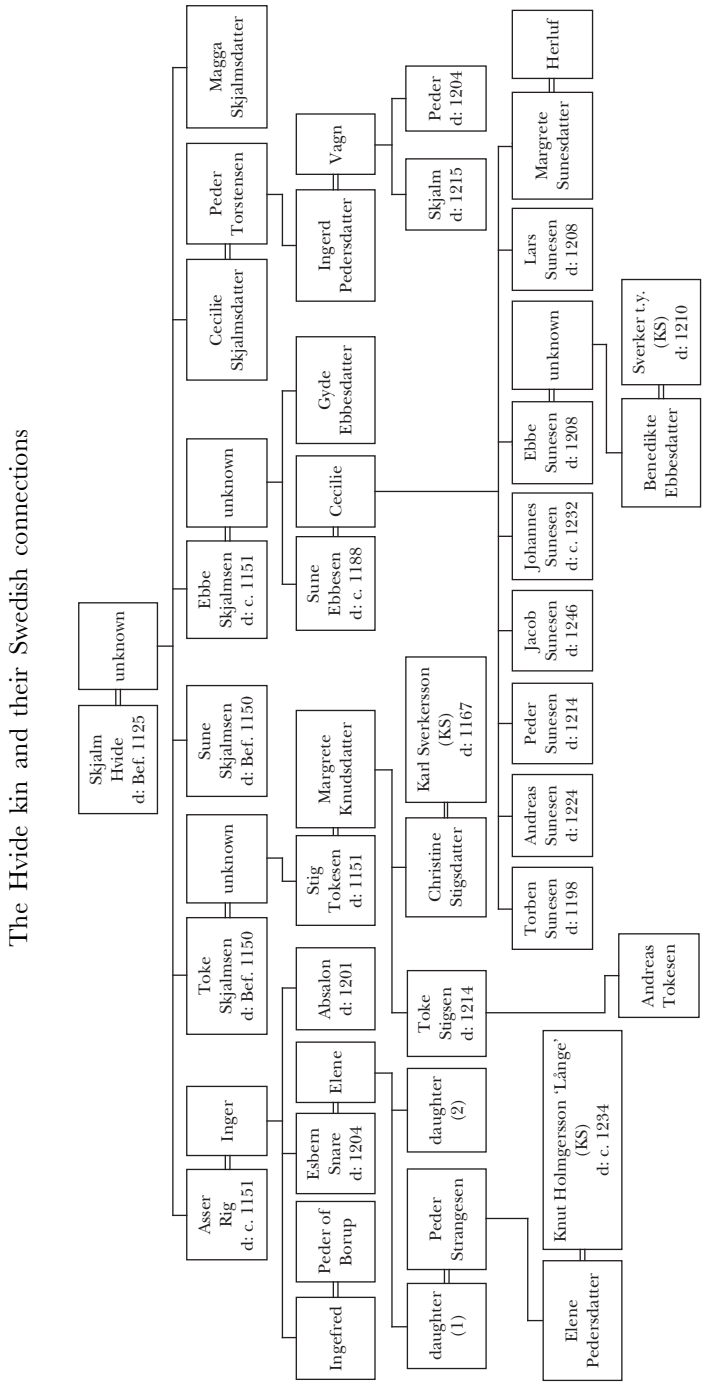
Descendants of King Valdemar I of Denmark


Sofia Vladimirovna d: 1198
Valdemar I Knudsen (KD) d: 1198
Tove (mistress)
Knud VI Valdemarsen (KD) d: 1202
Gertrud of Saxony d: 1197
Rickiza Valdemarsdatter d: 1220
Erik Knutsson (KS) d: 1216
Heinrich of Rostock
Sofie Valdemarsdatter d: 1208
Siegfried III (GfOrlamünde) d: 1206
Christoffer Valdemarsen (HgSouthJylland) d: c. 1173
mistresses
Berenguela of Portugal d: c. 1224
Valdemar II 'Sejr' (KD) d: 1241
'Dagmar' of Bohemia d: 1212
Ingeborg Valdemarsdatter d: 1237 - 1238
Philippe II 'Auguste' (KF) d: 1223
Helene Valdemarsdatter d: 1233
Wilhelm (HgLüneberg) d: 1213
Knud of Blekinge (HgEstonia) d: 1260
'Hedwig' of Pomerania
Niels Valdemarsen (HgNorthHalland) d: 1218
Oda of Schwerin
Valdemar d: 1231
Leonor of Portugal d: c. 1231
Albrecht (GfOrlamünde) d: 1245
Sophie
Otto (HgBraunschweig) d: 1252
Mathilde of Brandenburg d: 1261
Erik Knudsen (HgSouthHalland) d: 1304
Elisabeth
Cecilie Knudsdatter
Filip Petersson d: 1251
Benedikta Sunesdotter d: Aft. 1268
Svantepolk Knudsen d: 1310
daughter of Ernst of Gleichen
Niels Nielsen (HgNorthHalland) d: c. 1251
Cecilie Jensdatter

Descendants of King Valdemar II of Denmark and Berenguela of Portugal


Valdemar II 'Sejr' (KD) d: 1241
Berenguela of Portugal d: c. 1224
Erik 'Ploypenning' (KD) d: 1250
Jutta of Saxony
Abel (KD) d: 1252
Mechtilde of Holstein d: 1288
Christoffer I (KD) d: 1259
Sambiria / Margrete d: 1286
Sofie Valdemarsdatter (KD) d: 1247
Johann I (MgBrandenburg) d: 1266
Johann
Valdemar III (HgSleswig) d: c. 1258
Erik (HgSleswig) d: 1272
Margareta of Rügen
Sofie Eriksdatter d: 1286
Valdemar Birgersson (KS) d: 1302
Ingeborg Eriksdatter d: 1287
Magnus Håkonson 'Lagabøter' (KN) d: 1280
Jutta Eriksdatter d: 1284
Agnes Eriksdatter d: 1288 - 1295
Erik Glipping (KD) d: 1286
Agnes of Brandenburg d: 1304
Mechtild Christoffersdatter d: 1299 - 1300
Albrecht III (MgBrandenburg) d: 1300
Margrete Christoffersdatter d: 1306
Johann II (Gf Holstein-Kiel) d: c. 1321
Erik 'Menved' (KD) d: 1319
Ingeborg Magnusdotter d: 1319
Christoffer II (KD) d: 1332
Euphemia of Pomerania d: 1330
Valdemar d: 1304
Rickiza d: 1303 - 1308
Nikolaus II of Werle d: 1316
Margrete d: 1341
Birger Magnusson (KS) d: 1321

The Hvide kin and their Swedish connections



PROSOPOGRAPHY OF PEOPLE LISTED IN THE GENEALOGICAL TABLES AND OTHERS RELATED TO THE *SVERKERSKA ÄTTEN, ERIKSKA ÄTTEN* AND *FOLKUNGAÄTTEN*

The family is listed in italics after the name of each person, according to the custom of modern research in the region from which he or she came (Swedish *ätt/en*, Danish *slægt* etc.). The family names of the Norwegian and Danish kings and their relatives are not listed. The term *Folkungaätten* is preferred to *Bjälboätten*, as most of this kin-group had no connection to Bjälbo, but those of Magnus Minnesköld's branch of the family are listed as *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*).

Abel Valdemarsen. Son of King Valdemar II of Denmark and Berengaria of Portugal. Married Mechtilde of Holstein in 1237. King of Denmark from 1250 to 1252, when he was killed in battle with the Frisians.

Abjörn Sixtensson. '*Sparre av Tofta*'. Son of Sixten, of unknown lineage, and Ingrid Abjörnsdotter. Married to Ingeborg Ulvsdotter. Knight and member of the king's council under King Birger Magnusson, *drots* of *Hertig* Erik in 1302, and of *Hertig* Valdemar after 1307. Fled Sweden in 1304, for unknown reasons, and returned three years later (although some of his lands were confiscated). Died in 1310.

Absalon, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Asser Rig and Inger Eriksdotter. Born in 1128. Bishop of Roskilde, and also (exceptionally) Archbishop of Lund after 1177. Built the fortified bishop's residence Havn, around which Copenhagen grew, from 1167 onwards. Chief councillor of Knud VI. Died in 1201 in Sorø Monastery.

Andreas Tokesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Toke Stigsen and an unknown woman. Wife unnamed.

Agnes of Brandenburg, *Askanier*. Daughter of *Markgraf* Johann I of Brandenburg and Jutta of Saxony. Married to King Erik V 'Glipping' of Denmark († 1286) in 1273, and *Graf* Gerhard of Holstein-Plön in 1293. Died in 1304 and buried in Ringsted Church.

Agnes of Brandenburg, *Askanier*. Daughter of *Markgraf* Konrad of Brandenburg and Princess Konstancja of Poland. Married to Furst Albrecht I of Anhalt-Zerbst († 1316–17) in 1300, as his second wife. Died before 1330.

Agnes Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of King Birger Magnusson and Margrete Eriksdatter. Died in 1344.

Agnes Erksdatter. Daughter of King Erik 'Plovpenning' of Denmark and Jutta of Saxony. Founder of Agneta Nunnery in Roskilde, where she resided as abbess with her sister Jutta until they fled to Sweden in 1271. Died between 1288 and 1295.

Albrecht of Orlamünde, *Askanier*. Son of *Graf* Siegfried III of Orlamünde and Sofie Valdemarsdatter. Married Hedwig of Thuringia some time before

mid-1211. *Graf* of Holstein in 1208, to which was added Ratzeburg in 1217 and Wagrien and Stormarn in 1223. Died in 1245.

Albrecht I. Son of *Graf* Siegfried I of Anhalt and Aschersleben and Katarina Birgersdotter. *Graf* of Anhalt 1298–1316, *Graf* of Zerbst 1307–16. Married first to Liutgard of Holstein († aft. 1288), second, in 1300, to Agnes of Brandenburg. Died in 1316/17.

Albrecht II, *Welfen*. Born in 1318, son of *Herzog* Heinrich II 'der Löwe' ['the Lion'] of Mecklenburg and Anna of Saxe-Wittenberg. Married Eufemia Eriksdotter in 1336. *Herzog* of Mecklenburg from 1348 and of Schwerin from 1358. The second son of Albrecht and Eufemia, also named Albrecht, eventually became king of Sweden after Eufemia's brother Magnus Eriksson was deposed. Albrecht II died in Schwerin in 1379 and was buried in Doberan.

Albrecht III, *Askanier*. Son of *Markgraf* Otto III of Brandenburg and Božena (Beatrix) of Bohemia. *Markgraf* of Brandenburg from 1267. Married Mechtild Christoffersdatter in 1269/71. Died in 1300, buried in Kloster Himmelpfort.

Algot Brynolfsson, *Algotsönnernas ätt*. Son of Brynolf 'Stallare' and Margareta Persdotter. Extensive landholder and *Lagman* of Västergötland c. 1270. Died in the 1290s.

Anders (Andreas) Adreae, *And ätten*. Son of Anders and a daughter of Israel Erlandsson. Magister in Paris, dean in Uppsala, advisor to Magnus Ladulås in 1288 and Birger Magnusson in 1304. Member of the *nämnd* that codified *Upplandslagen*. Died in 1317. His inheritance passed to Ramborg Israelsdotter.

Andreas Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie. Studied in Paris, Bologna and Oxford. Dean in Roskilde and *kansler* of Kings Knud VI and Valdemar II c. 1190 to 1202. Became Archbishop of Lund in 1201. Took part in King Valdemar II's expedition to Estonia and helped to organise the province. Translated *Skånelagen* into Latin and founded the first Dominican Priory in Denmark in 1222. Resigned his office in 1223, after becoming ill, and died as a hermit in 1224. Buried in Lund Cathedral.

Asser 'Rig' (Skjalmsen), *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Skjalm Tokesen and Signe. Married Inger, daughter of Erik Jarl of Falster. Died in 1151. Founder of Sorø Monastery, with his brother Esbern. ('Rig', probably from Rüg, Rügen, where he was *hövitsman*.)

Benedikta (Bengta) Sunesdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of Sune Folkesson and Helena Sverkersdotter. Abducted from Vreta Nunnery by Lars Petersson in 1244. After his death in Norway she returned to Sweden. In 1253 married to Svantepolk Knudsen. Died some time after 1261.

Benedikte Ebbesdatter, *Hvide-slægt*. Daughter of Ebbe Sunesen and an unknown mother. Married King Sverker the Younger († 1210), probably in c. 1208, as his second queen. Alternatively, she may have been married to him before Ingegärd Birgersdotter, in which case she died c. 1200.

Bengt Algotsson, *Algotsönnernas ätt*. Son of Algot Brynolfsson and probably Margareta Petersdotter. Fled to Norway after the abduction of Ingrid Svantepolksdotter from Vreta by his brother in 1288. Returned to favour after Magnus Ladulås's death. His son eventually became *lagman* of Västergötland.

Bengt Birgersson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Birger Jarl Magnusson and (probably) Ingeborg Eriksdotter. Born shortly before Ingeborg's death, or, just possibly, a son of Mechtilde of Holstein. Archdeacon at Linköping Cathedral and *kansler* of his brother King Magnus. Made *Hertig* of Finland in 1284 and Bishop of Linköping in 1286. Died from disease in 1291. The title 'hertig' was not used again until Gustav Vasa's reign.

Bengt Hafridsson, *Bengt Hafridssons ätt, 'Lejon'*. Son of Hafrid Sigtryggsdotter (*Boberg*) and possibly one Gustav. *Lagman* of Västergötland c. 1291–1307, knight in 1307 and member of the king's council.

Bengt Johansson, *Ängelätten*. Son of Johan Ängel t.e. and a daughter of Folke Jarl. Archdeacon of Uppsala Cathedral in 1274.

Bengt Magnusson,*Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Magnus Minneskold and an unknown mother. Bishop of Linköping from 1220 to 1237. Died in 1237.

Bengt Magnusson (of Ulvåsa), *Folkungaättens 'lagmansgren'*. Son of *Lagman* Magnus Bengtsson and Ragnhild. Married to Sigrid 'den Fagra'. Knight and member of Magnus Ladulås's council in 1288. *Lagman* of Östergötland by 1269, and still in 1291/2. Dead by 1294.

Bengt Snivel, *Folkungaätten*. Son of Folke 'den Tjock' and the Danish princess Ingegerd Knudsdatter.

Berenguela of Portugal (also called **Berengaria** in Denmark). Daughter of King Sancho I Martino of Portugal and Dulcia of Barcelona. Married to King Valdemar II 'Sejr' of Denmark in 1213. Died c. 1224. Buried in Ringsted Monastery.

Birger Algotsson, *Algotsönnernas ätt*. Son of Algot Brynolfsson and an unknown mother. Married to Kristina Larsdotter 'Ama' by 1335.

Birger 'Brosa' ['the Smiling'], *Folkungaätten*. Son of Bengt Snivel and an unknown woman. Married to Brigiða Haraldsdotter. *Riksjarl* from c. 1175 to 1202. Died in 1202 on Visingsö, possibly buried in Riseberga Convent.

Birger Filipsson, *Aspenäs ätt*. Son of Filip Birgersson (possibly descended from Erik Jedvardsson) and Cecilia Knutsdotter (daughter of Knut Jarl). Married to Ulfhild Magnusdotter. 'Folkunga' rebel of 1278. Executed in 1280.

Birger Magnusson (Birger Jarl), *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Magnus Minneskold and Ingrid Ylva. Riksjarl from 1148 to 1266 and de facto ruler of Sweden for most of his son Valdemar's reign (1250–1274). Died 1266, probably in Long, Västergötland (*Ek's* 'Jarlbolung'), buried in Varnhem Monastery.

Birger Magnusson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of King Magnus Ladulås and Hedwig of Holstein. King of Sweden from 1290 to 1319, under the regency of Tyrgils Knutsson while a minor. Deposed by a coalition of nobles in 1319, after imprisoning and murdering his brothers. Died in 1321.

Birger Petersson (Persson), *Finsta ätten*. Son of Peter Israelsson and Margareta Magnusdotter. First married Kristina Johansdotter (*Elofsönnernas ätt*) and then, between 1293 and 1301, Ingeborg Bengtsdotter. St Birgitta was one of their children. Became a knight and councillor of the realm between 1285 and 1291, *Lagman* of Tiundaland in 1293 and then *Lagman* of Uppland from 1296. Leader of the *nämnd* that codified *Upplandslagen*. Leading rebel against King Birger in 1308 and 1318. Died in 1327. Buried in Uppsala Cathedral.

Birgitta Brynolfsdotter, *Bengt Hafridssons ätt*. Daughter of Brynolf Bengtsson and Ingegärd Svantepolksdotter. Married to Gregers Magnusson.

Birgitta Johansdotter (Jonsdotter), *Aspenäsätten*. Daughter of Johan Filipsson and Ingeborg Svantepolksdotter. Married Peter Ragnvaldsson by 1325, died after 1346.

Birgitta Larsdotter. Unknown parentage. Married to Filip Larsson († 1248).

Bjørn 'Jernside' ['Ironside']. A son of Harald Kesja, possibly also of his wife Ragnhild (daughter of Magnus Berrføtt), possibly of a mistress. Married to Katarina Ingesdotter and probably the father of Christine, Erik Jedvardsson's queen. Drowned in 1134.

Blanche of Namur. Daughter of Count Jean I of Namur and his second wife Marie of Artois. Married to King Magnus Eriksson in 1335. Later accused

of murdering her son Erik and of adultery—there is no evidence for either. From 1358 lived in Norway, where she administered fiefs in Vestfold. Died in 1363.

Blot-Sven ['Sacrifice-Sven'] (**Torkelsson**). Chosen as king of the *svear*, or northern *svear*, from 1084–88, because he supported the pagan cult at Uppsala. Driven out and killed by Inge t.e., probably his half-brother, in 1087/88. Supposedly responsible for the martyrdom of St Eskil.

Brigida Haraldsdotter. Daughter of King Harald 'Gille' of Norway and a concubine, possibly Tora Guttormsdotter. First marriage Karl Sunesson, Jarl of Västgötaland, second to King Magnus Henriksen of Sweden († 1161), third marriage to Birger Jarl Brosa. Buried at Riseberga Nunnery.

Brynolf Algotsson, *Algotsönnersnas ätt*. Son of Algot Brynolfsson and (probably) Margareta. Studied in Paris for some fifteen years before becoming a canon in Skara and Bishop of Skara from 1278 to 1317, with a temporary gap in 1288–89 when he fled to Alvastra monastery to escape Magnus Ladulås's wrath over the abduction of Ingrid Svantpolksdotter by his brother. Died in 1307. Wrote an *oficium* for the 11th century St Helena of Skövde.

Brynolf Bengtsson, *Bengt Hafridssons ätt*. Son of Bengt Hafridsson. Married to Ingegärd Svantepolksdotter. Died in 1315.

Cecilia Karlsdotter, *Sverkerska ätten*. Daughter of King Karl Sverkersson and Christine Stigsdatter.

Cecilia Knutsdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of Knut Jarl Birgersson and (probably) Sigrid Knutsdotter. Married to Filip Birgersson. Buried in Vårfruberga Convent.

Cecilie Esbernsdatter, *Hvide-slægt*. Daughter of Esbern Snare and (probably) Holmfred. Married Andreas Knudsen Grosen.

Cecilie Jensdatter. Daughter of Jens Jakobsen and *Grafin* Adelheid of Dassel. Married first Niels Nielsen, *Hertug* of South Halland, secondly (1252) R. Andreas Olufsen Glug.

Cecilie Knudsdatter. Daughter of Knud of Blekinge and Hedwig of Pomerania. Married Filip Petersson c. 1250, probably the same rebel who died at Herrevadsbro in 1251.

Christine Bjørnsdatter. Daughter of the Danish magnate Bjørn Jernside and Katarina, daughter of King Inge t.e. Married to King Erik Jedvardsson.

Christine Stigsdatter, *Hvide-slægt*. Daughter of Stig Tokesen (Hvide) and Margrete, daughter of Knud Lavard. Married to King Karl Sverkersson in 1163. Died c. 1169.

Christoffer I. Son of King Abel of Denmark and Mechtilde of Holstein. Married Sambiria of Pomerania. King of Denmark 1252–59. Died in Ribe and buried in Ribe Cathedral.

Christoffer II. Son of King Erik Glipping of Denmark and Agnes of Brandenburg. Succeeded his brother as king in 1320. Between 1300 and 1304 married Euphemia of Pomerania. Died in 1332, buried in Sorø Abbey.

Christoffer Valdemarsen. Son of King Valdemar Knudsen of Denmark and his mistress Tove. Jarl (*Hertug*) of 'South Jylland' (Schleswig). Died in 1173, buried in Ringsted.

'Dagmar' of Bohemia, *Přemyslid*. Daughter of King Ottokar Přemysl of Bohemia and Edel (Adelheid) of Meissen. Usually known by the name Margaretha in Bohemia. Married to Valdemar Sejr in 1205. Died in Ribe in 1212, buried in Ringsted Church.

Ebbe Skjalmsen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Skjalm Tokesen and 'Signe Asbjørnsdatter' (of England). Died in 1150 at Knardrup.

Ebbe Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie. Killed at the Battle of Lena in 1208. Body returned to Denmark and buried in Sorø Monastery.

Elene Pedersdatter, Daughter of Peder Strangesen and a daughter of Esbern Snare. Probably married to King Knut 'Långe', and possibly, after his death, Filip Larsson.

Elof, *Elofsönnernas ätt*. Half-brother of Birger Jarl Magnusson, probably a son of Ingrid Ylva by a second husband, but possibly a son of Magnus Minnesköld by a concubine.

Elźbieta Rycheza of Poland. See 'Rycheza Elźbieta'.

Erik I of Schleswig. Son of King Abel of Denmark and Mechtild of Holstein. Succeeded his brother Valdemar as *hertug* of Schleswig in 1257. Married Margareta of Rügen in 1259/60. Died in 1272.

Erik Årsäll. Possibly a son of Blot-Sven, perhaps king in opposition to Inge t.e. for a short period after Blot-Sven's death in 1187–88. Recorded as having carried out sacrifices.

Erik Birgersson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Birger Jarl Magnusson and Ingeborg Eriksdotter. Known as 'Allsintet', because he had no titles. Conspired more than once to overthrow his brother King Valdemar. Died in 1275. Buried in Varnhem Monastery.

Erik Birgersson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of King Birger Magnusson and Margrete Eriksdatter. Murdered in 1319.

Erik 'Emune'. Son of King Erk Ejegod of Denmark and a mistress. King of Denmark from 1134 to 1137, after defeating Niels Svensen and his son Magnus. Married 'Malmfrid' of Kiev c. 1130. Died in 1137.

Erik Eriksson 'Läspe och halte' ['Lisping and limping'], *Erikska ätten*. Born 1216, son of Erik Knutsson and Rickiza Valdemarsdatter. Married to Katarina Sunesdotter. King of Sweden from 1222–29, deposed, but returned to become king again from 1234 to 1250. Died without issue in 1250. Buried in Varnhem Monastery.

Erik 'Glipping'. Son of Christoffer I of Denmark and Margrete Sambiria, succeeded his father as king in 1259. Married Agnes of Brandenburg in 1273. He was murdered at Finderup, near Viborg 1286.

Erik Jedvardsson, *Erikska ätten*. Son of an otherwise unknown Jedvard. Married to Kristina Bjørnsdatter. King of Sweden from 1156 to 1160, later became St Erik, although never canonised. Killed in battle against Magnus Henriksen at Uppsala in 1160. Buried in Gamla Uppsala Church.

Erik Knudsen. Son of Knud of Blekinge and Hedwig of Pomerania. Married Elisabeth, of unknown lineage. *Hertug* of South Halland in 1284. *Drots* of King Knud Valdemarsen. Died in 1304, buried in Ringsted Church.

Erik Knutsson, *Erikska ätten*. Son of King Knut Eriksson of Sweden and (probably) Cecilia Sverkersdotter. Married in 1210 to Rickiza Valdemarsdatter of Denmark. King of Sweden from 1208 to 1216. Died in 1216 at Näs (Visingsö). Buried in Varnhem Monastery.

Erik Magnusson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Second son of King Magnus Ladulås and Hedwig of Holstein. Married Ingeborg Håkonsdotter in 1312. *Hertig* of Södermanland in 1303, and of Värmland, Dalsland and Västergötland in 1310. Died as a prisoner of his brother Birger at Nyköping Castle in 1318. Buried in Uppsala Cathedral.

Erik 'Menved'. Son of King Erik Glipping of Denmark and Agnes of Brandenburg. Succeeded his father as king in 1286. Married Ingeborg, daughter of Magnus Ladulås, in 1296. Died in 1319, buried in Ringsted Church.

Erik 'Plovpenning' ['Ploughpenny']. Son of King Valdemar II of Denmark and Berengaria of Portugal. Married Jutta of Saxony in 1239. King of Denmark from 1241 to 1250, when he was murdered by his brother Abel. Buried in Ringsted Church.

Erik Stenkilsson, *Stenkil ätten*. Son of King Stenkil, reigned in Sweden, or at least Götaland, between 1066 and 1067, when he died. He may have had a (half-?) brother, also called Erik, who was accepted as king in parts of Svealand.

Erik Valdemarsson, *Folkungaättens Valdemarsgren*. Born c. 1271, son of King Valdemar Birgersson and Sofie Eriksdatter. Married Ingeborg Knutsdotter. Counsellor of King Håkon Magnusson of Norway in 1308, and of King Magnus Eriksson in 1322. Died in 1330, buried in Sigtuna.

Erland Israelsson, *Finsta ätten*. Son of Israel and an unknown woman.

Esbern Snare, *Hvide slægt*. Son of Asser Rig and Inge. Married first to Holmfred, second to Ingeborg, both of unknown origin, third to Helene, daughter of a Swedish jarl, presumably Guttorm. Died at Sæby gård in 1204. Buried at Sorø Abbey.

Eskil Magnusson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Magnus Minnesköld and an unknown mother. Married Kristina Nilsdotter in 1217. *Lagman* of Västergötland after c. 1219, credited with revising its law code in the *Västgötalagen lagman* list. Died in 1227.

Eufemia Eriksdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of *Hertig* Erik Magnusson and Ingeborg Håkonsdotter. Married to *Herzog* Albrecht II of Mecklenburg († 1379). Died in 1371.

Euphemia of Pomerania. Daughter of Bogislaw IV, *Herzog* of Pomerania-Wolgast, and his second wife Margareta of Rügen. Married to King Christoffer II of Denmark at some time between 1300 and 1304. Died in 1330, buried in Sorø Abbey.

Filip Birgersson (**Filip Jarl**), *Folkungaätten*. Son of Birger Brosa and Brigiða Haraldsdotter. Jarl of Norway during King Sverre Sigurdsson's reign. Killed at the Battle of Oslo in 1200.

Filip Birgersson, *Aspenäs ätt*. Married to Cecilia Birgersdotter. Dead by 1279, and buried in Vårfruberga Nunnery.

Filip Eriksson, *Erikska ätten*. Son of Erik Jedvardsson and Christine Bjørnsdatter. Probably married a certain Margareta.

Filip Halstensson. Son of King Halsten. Joint-ruler with his brother Inge t.y. from 1110 to 1118. Married to Ingegerd, daughter of the Norwegian king Harald Hardråde. Died in 1118, probably buried in Vreta.

Filip Ingevaldsson, *'Örnsparre'*. Son of Ingevald, of unkown lineage. Married a daughter of Gregers Birgersson († 1301).

Filip Knutsson, *Erikska ätten*. Son of King Knut Långe and probably Helena Pedersdatter. 1251 '*folkunga*' rebel and probable throne pretender. Executed in 1251.

Filip Larsson, *Folkungaätten*. Son of Lars Filipson and an unknown woman. Possibly married to Helena Pedersdatter, widow of King Knut Långe. *Folkunga* rebel in 1247–48. Executed in 1248.

Filip Törneson, *Hjorthorn*. Son of Törne Jonsson. *Lagman* in Närke.

Folke Algotsson, *Algotsönnernas ätt*. Son of *Lagman* Algot Brynolfsson. Magnate and knight. Abducted Ingrid Svantepolksdotter from Vreta nunnery in 1288 and fled to Norway, where he died c. 1210.

Folke Birgersson (**Folke Jarl**), *Folkungaätten*. Son of Birger Brosa and Brigiða Haraldsdotter. Probably married to a certain Ulfhild. *Riksjarl* from 1208 to 1210. Killed at the Battle of Gestilren in 1210.

Folke Johansson, *Ängelätten*. Son of Johan Ängel t.e. and a daughter of Folke Jarl. Archdeacon at Uppsala and Archbishop of Uppsala from 1274 to 1277. Died in 1277. Buried in Uppsala Cathedral.

Folke 'den Tjock' ['the Fat'], *Folkungaätten*. According to Saxo, Bengt Snivel's father, married to Princess Ingegerd Knutsdatter of Denmark.

Gerhard II 'der Blinde' ['the Blind'], *Schauenburger*. Son of *Graf* Gerhard I of Holstein-Itzehoe and Elisabeth of Mecklenburg. *Graf* of Holstein-Plön from 1290 to 1312. First wife Ingeborg Valdemarsdotter († c. 1290), second Agnes († 1304), daughter of *Markgraf* Johann of Brandenburg. Died 1312.

Gerhard IV, *Schauenburger*. Son of *Graf* Gerhard II of Holstein Plön and Ingeborg Valdemarsdotter. *Graf* of Holstein-Plön (for some of the time alongside his brother Johann III) from 1312 to 1323. Married to Anastasia of Wittenburg. Died in 1323.

Gertrud of Saxony, *Welfen*. Daughter of *Herzog* Heinrich 'der Löwe' ['the Lion'] of Saxony and Clementia of Zähringen. Married to Knud Valdemarsen (King of Denmark 1182) in 1177, became Queen of Denmark in 1182. Died in 1196.

Gregers Birgersson, *Folkungaättens 'oäkta gren'*. Illegitimate son of Birger Jarl Magnusson and an unknown mistress. Died in 1276, buried in Uppsala.

Gregers Magnusson, *Folkungaättens 'oäkta gren'*. Son of Magnus Gregersson. Married Birgitta Brynolfsdotter. *Lagman* of Västergötland and twice *drots* of King Magnus Eriksson in the 1330s. Rebelled in 1338 and lost his lands as a result. Returned later and was dead by 1350, probably killed during Magnus's Karelian expedition.

Gyda Ebbesdatter, *Hvide-slægt*. Daughter of Ebbe Skjalmsen and Ragnhild. Married to Oluf Glug. Died in Bavelse, Præstø.

Hafrid Sigtryggsdotter, *Boberg*. Daughter of Sigtrygg Bengtsson and a daughter of Magnus Minneskӧld. Married to Gustav, of unknown lineage. Died in 1286.

Håkon 'Galen' ['the Crazy'], Son of Bård Guttormsson and Cecilie Sigurdsdotter (sister of King Sverre, formerly married to *Lagman* Folkvid of Värmland). Married Kristine Nilsdotter in 1204. Jarl of Norway and effective ruler during the minorities of Sverre's successors. Died in 1214.

Håkon the Younger, *Sverres ætt*. Son of King Håkon IV Håkonsson 'Gamle' of Norway and Margareta Skulesdotter. Married Rikissa Birgersdotter in 1251. Crowned as joint king in 1240. Died in 1257, before his father.

Hallsten Stenkilsson, *Stenkil ätt*. Son of King Stenkil and a daughter of King Emund. According to Adam of Bremen, a son of Stenkil who reigned as king of all Sweden between 1067 and 1070. He was driven out of the Mälar region, but may have been joint king in Västergötland between 1079 and 1084.

Harald 'Gille' (from Irish *Gillechrist*, **'Servant of Christ'**). Son of King Magnus Berrføtt and a mistress. King of Norway from 1130 to 1136, when he was murdered. Married Ingrid Ragvaldsdotter.

Hedwig of Holstein (Sw. **Helvig**). Daughter of *Graf* Gerhard I of Holstein-Itzehoe and Elisabeth of Mecklenburg. Married to King Magnus Ladulås in 1276. Died c. 1325.

'Hedwig' of Pomerania. Daughter of Duke (*Herzog*) Svantepolk of Pomerania and one of his two wives. Married to Knud Valdemarsen of Blekinge.

Hedwig of Ravensburg. Daughter of *Graf* Otto III of Ravensberg († 1306) and Hedwig of Lippe. Married *Marsk* Tyrgils Knutsson in 1303. Died in 1346.

Heinrich I of Werle, *Mecklenburger*. Son of Niklot I of Werle and Jutta of Anhalt. Married Rikissa Birgersdotter († c. 1288) in 1262, and Mathilde of Braunschweig-Lüneburg in 1291. *Furst* of Werle zu Güstrow. Murdered by his sons near Saal in 1291.

Heinrich (Borwin/Burwyl) III of Mecklenburg-Rostock. Married Sofia Eriksdotter of Sweden by February 1237. Lord of Mecklenburg-Rostock. Died c. 1278, buried in Doberan.

Helena Sverkersdotter, *Sverkerska ätten*. Daughter of King Sverker t.e. and Ulfhild. Married to Knud Magnussen.

Helena Sverkersdotter, *Sverkerska ätten*. Daughter of King Sverker t.y. Karlsson and Benedikte Ebbesdatter. Married Sune Folkesson, possibly after being abducted from Vreta Nunnery. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Helene Valdemarsdatter. Daughter of Valdemar I of Denmark and Sofia Vladimirovna. Married to *Herzog* Wilhelm of Lüneberg († 1213) in 1202. Died in 1223, buried in the Church of St Michael in Lüneberg.

Helga Anundsdotter, *Harald Gudmundssons ätt*. Daughter of Anund Haraldsson, *Lagman* of Södermanland and counsellor of the king, and Ingeborg Elofsdotter. Married to Rörik Birgersson.

Henrik 'Skadelår' ['The Limper']. Son of the Danish prince Sven Svensen. Ruled some of the former Abodrite territory on behalf of King Niels. Married Ingrid Ragvaldsdotter, but they later separated. Implicated in the murder of Knud Lavard in 1131, and killed at the Battle of Fotevik in 1134.

Holmger Filipsson, *Erikska ätten*. Son of Filip Eriksson and (probably) Margareta, of unknown lineage.

Holmger Folkesson (perhaps called 'Stengavel' ['Stonehammer']), *Folkungaätten-Ama ätten*. Son of Folke Jarl. Married to Kristina Fastedotter. Descendants known as 'Ama ätten'. Died c. 1255.

Holmger Knutsson, *Erikska ätten*. Son of King Knut Långe and probably Helena Pedersdatter. *Folkunga* rebel and throne pretender in 1147–48. Executed in 1248–49. Buried at Sko Kloster. Became a local saint.

Inge the Elder (Stenkilsson). *Stenkil ätt*. Son of King Stenkil and (probably) a daughter of King Emund. He may have been married to Helena Torkelsdotter, and was later married to Ragnhild (possibly St Ragnhild), probably sister of Blot-Sven. Seems to have been king of both *svear* and *götar* from 1079 to 1110, at first as joint king with Halsten, except for a brief period when he was driven from northern Svealand (1084–88) and replaced by Blot-Sven. Died in 1110.

Inge the Younger (Halstensson). Son of King Halsten. Reigned in Sweden jointly with his brother Filip from 1110 to 1118, then alone until 1125. First married Helena Stenkilsdotter. Recorded in some sources as married to Ulfhild, later Queen of Sverker t.e. Inge died in 1125 and was probably buried at Vreta.

Ingebjørg Eriksdotter. Daughter of King Erik 'Præsthatar' ['the Priest-hater'] of Norway and Margaret of Scotland. In 1312 married to Hertig Valdemar Magnusson.

Ingebjørg Håkonsdotter. Daughter of King Håkon V Magnusson of Norway and his second wife Euphemia of Rügen. Married to Hertig Erik Magnusson

in 1312, and Knud 'Porse', Hertug of South Halland and Estonia in 1327 († 1330). Died in 1360.

Ingebjørg Sverresdotter, *Sverres ætt*. Daughter of King Sverre Sigurdson of Norway, who married an otherwise unknown son of Sverker d.y. called Karl.

Ingeborg Bengtsdotter, *Folkungaättens lagmansgren*. Daughter of Bengt Magnusson, *lagman* of Östergötland and Sigrid 'den fagre'. Married Birger Petersson, *Lagman* of Tiundaland.

Ingeborg Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). According to German sources, *filiam regis Sueciae*, but most likely a daughter of Birger Jarl Magnusson (in which case probably of Ingeborg Eriksdotter). Married in c. 1270 to *Herzog* Johann I of Saxe-Lauenburg. Died in 1302, buried in Mölln.

Ingeborg Eriksdatter. Daughter of King Erik 'Plovpenning' of Sweden and Jutta of Saxony. Married to King Magnus 'Lagabøter' of Norway in 1261. Died in 1287.

Ingeborg Eriksdotter, *Erikska ätten*. Daughter of King Erik Knutsson of Sweden and Rickiza Valdemarsdatter. Married to Birger Jarl Magnusson c. 1238. Died in 1254, buried in Varnhem Monastery.

Ingeborg Knutsdotter, *Aspenäsätten*. Daughter of Knut Jonsson and Katarina Bengtsdotter. Wife of Erik Valdemarsson. Died after 1333.

Ingeborg Magnusdotter, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Daughter of King Magnus Ladulås and Hedwig of Holstein. Married to King Erik Menved of Denmark in 1296. Became a nun in St Klara Nunnery, Roskilde, in 1318. Died in 1319, buried in Ringsted Church.

'Ingeborg' (Mstislavna) of Kiev, *Rurikid*. Daughter of Mstislav (Prince of Novgorod and later Kiev), and Kristina Ingesdotter. Married to Knud Lavard in c. 1116.

Ingeborg Svantepolksdotter, *Skarholmsätten*. Daughter of Svantepolk Knudsen and Bengta Sunedotter. Married to Johan Filipsson, and after his execution to Tune Anundsson. Dead before 1341.

Ingeborg Ulvsdotter, *Ulv ätten*. Daughter of Ulf Karlsson. Married first to the knight Knut Mattson (*Lejonbalke*, † 1289), then to Abjörn Sixtensson (*Sparre av Tofta*), knight and royal council member. Died before 1308.

Ingeborg Valdemarsdatter (known as **Isambour** in France). Daughter of King Valdemar Knudsen of Denmark and Sofia Vladimirovna. Married to King Philippe 'Auguste' of France in 1193, but repudiated soon afterwards. Restored as queen in 1213. Died in 1236 and buried in Saint Jean-en-l'Ile.

Ingeborg Valdemarsdotter, *Folkungaättens Valdemarsgren*. Daughter of King Valdemar Birgersson and Sofie Eriksdatter. Married to Gerhard II of Holstein in 1275. Died c. 1290.

Ingegärd Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of Birger Brosa and Brigiða Haraldsdotter. Married Sverker Karlsson c. 1200, Queen of Sweden from then to her death, on 7 April in an unknown year, probably c. 1207.

Ingegärd Filipsdotter, *Aspenäs ätt*. Daughter of Filip Birgersson and Cecilia Knutsdotter. Wife of Magnus Gregersson.

Ingegärd Svantepolksdotter, *Skarholmsätt*. Daughter of Svantepolk Knudsen and (probably) his second wife, a daughter of Ernst of Gleichen. Her first husband was Brynjolf Bengtsson (*Bengt Hafridssons ätt*, † 1315), her second Mattias Törnesson (*Törne Mattsons ätt*, † 1318). Died after 1322.

Ingegärd Sverkersdotter. *Sverkerska ätten*. Daughter of King Sverker the Elder and Ulfhild. Abbess of Vreta Nunnery for some forty years, where she died and was buried in 1204.

Ingegerd Knutsdatter. Daughter of King Knud II of Denmark (St Knud)

and Adele of Flanders (descended from Charlemagne). Married Folke 'den Tjocke'.

Ingrid Elofsdotter, *Folkungaättens 'oäkta gren'*. Daughter of Elof, probably the same who was half-brother to Birger Jarl. Became a Dominican nun in c. 1270, and later founded Skänninge Convent, where she became prioress not long before her death. Died in 1282. Later considered a saint, although never officially canonised.

Ingrid Ragvaldsdotter, *Stenkil ätt*. Daughter of Ragvald, son of King Inge t.e. Married first to Henrik Skadelår († 1134), then to King Harald Gille of Norway († 1136), then to Ottar Birting († 1146/47), and later to Ivar Sneis and Arne 'Kongsmag'. Died after 1160.

Ingrid Skulesdotter. Daughter of Skule Bårdsson (Jarl of Norway and later throne pretender) and Ragnhild. Married to Knut Kristinasson (Knut Håkonsson) in 1227. Died in 1232.

Ingrid Svantepolksdotter, *Skarholmsätten*. Daughter of Svantepolk Knudsen and either Bengta Sunedotter or a daughter of Ernst of Gleichen. Entered Vreta Nunnery, but abducted by Folke Algotsson in 1288. They fled to Norway, but she returned to Vreta in 1310 after his death. In 1323, and still in 1345, she was abbess of Vreta. Died after 1350.

Ingrid Ylva, *Sverkerska ätten*. Daughter of King Sverker the Elder and (probably) Ulfhild. Married to Magnus Minnesköld, almost certainly as his second or subsequent wife.

Israel, *Finsta ätten*. Uppland landowner of unknown origin, who owned a manor at Finsta, after which he and his descendant family are named. Dead by 1269.

Israel Andersson, *And ätten*. Son of Anders And and an unknown woman. Married to Ramfrid. *Lagman* in Tiundaland.

Israel Erlandsson, *Finsta ätten*. Son of Erland Israelsson and Katarina Johansdotter. Dominican friar at Sigtuna and Archbishop of Västerås from 1309 to his death in 1332. Probably author of *De Vita et Miraculis S. Erici*.

Iziaslav Mstislavich, *Rurikid*. Son of Mstislav of Kiev and Kristina Ingesdotter. Prince of Vladimir and Volynia 1134–42, Prince of Pereiaslavl 1143–45, Prince of Kiev 1146–54. His first wife was a daughter of Konrad III of Germany, and his second wife (1154) was a daughter of King Demetre of Georgia. Died in 1154.

Jakob Israelsson, *Finsta ätten*. Son of Israel of Finsta. Archbishop of Uppsala from 1281 to 1284. Died in 1284.

Jakob Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie. Married to Estrid. Probably took part in the Lena expedition of 1208, but survived. Governed the Wendish lands around the Elbe on behalf of Valdemar II Sejr. The most powerful noble in Denmark in the early thirteenth century. Died in 1246.

Jebs Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie. Died on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1202.

Johan Ängel the Elder, *Ängelätten*. Parents unknown. Knight, died in 1268 at the latest.

Johan Ängel the Younger (**Erlandsson**), *Finsta ätten*. Son of Erland Israelsson and Katarina Johansdotter (daughter of Johan Ängel t.e.). Knight, who took the arms of the Ängelätten as well as the name. Died without issue in 1314.

Johan Elofsson, *Elofsönnernas ätt*. Son of Elof, brother of St Ingrid. Became a Teutonic knight in 1281 and was killed in 1295.

Johan Filipsson, *Aspenäs ätten*. Son of Filip Birgersson. First husband of Ingeborg Svantepolksdotter. 'Folkunga' rebel in 1278, executed in 1280.

Johan Sverkersson, *Sverkerska ätten*. Son of King Sverker the Younger and Ingegärd Birgersdotter. King of Sweden from 1216 to 1222. Died 1222, unmarried and without issue. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Johann I, *Askanier*. Son of Albrecht II of Brandenburg and Mathilde of Landsberg. *Markgraf* of Brandenburg from 1220 to 1266. Married Sofie Abelsdatter of Denmark († 1247) c. 1234, and Jutta of Saxony (half-sister of the Jutta who married Erik 'Plovpenning') in 1255. Died in 1266, buried in Kloster Chronin.

Johann I, *Askanier*. Son of *Herzog* Albrecht I of Saxony and Helene of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. *Herzog* of Saxe-Lauenburg from 1260 to 1286. Died 1286.

Johann II, *Askanier*. Son of *Herzog* Johann I of Saxe-Lauenburg and Ingeborg (Birgersdotter?) of Sweden. *Herzog* of Saxe-Lauenburg from 1305 to 1322. Died in 1322.

Johann II, *Schauenburger*. Son of *Graf* Johann I of Holstein-Schaumburg (Kiel) and Elisabeth of Saxony. Married Margrete Christoffersdatter in 1276. Graf of Holstein-Kiel from 1263 to 1316. Probably died in 1321.

Johann III, *Schauenburger*. Son of *Graf* Gerhard II of Holstein-Plön and Ingeborg Valdemarsdotter. *Graf* of Holstein-Plön after his nephew Gerhard V's death in 1350. Married Katherine of Glogau in 1319, and Mirozlawa of Wittenburg in 1327. Died in 1359.

Johannes Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie, lord of Alsted.

Jutta of Saxony, *Askanier*. Daughter of *Herzog* Albrecht I of Saxony and Agnes of Austria. Married to King Erik 'Plovpenning' of Denmark in 1239, became Queen of Denmark in 1241. After Erik's death (1250) married Burkhard of Rosenberg, *Burggraf* of Magdeburg.

Jutta Eriksdatter. Became Abbess of St Agneta Nunnery in Roskilde in 1266, but fled to Sweden to join her sister Queen Sofie in 1271, where, according to several sources, she became the lover of King Valdemar Birgersson. Returned to Denmark, where she died in 1284 or shortly afterwards.

Karl 'Döve' ['the Deaf'], *Folkungaätten*. Son of Bengt Snivel and an unknown woman. Jarl of the *svear* and *götar* from 1210 (?) to 1220. Killed in 1220 at Leal (Lihula) by Estonian tribesmen.

Karl Gregersson, *Folkungaättens 'oäkta gren'*. Son of Gregers Birgersson. Married Ramborg Israelsdotter. Died in 1308.

Karl Johansson, *Ängelätten*. Son of Johan Ängel t.e. and a daughter of Folke Jarl. Knight, took part in Birger Jarl's negotiations with Häkon Häkonsson of Norway in 1253.

Karl Karlsson, *Folkungaätten*. Son of Karl Döve. Entitled 'dominus' in Birger Jarl's treaty with Lübeck, so presumably a knight. Died c. 1253.

Karl Magnusson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Magnus Minneskold and an unknown mother. Bishop of Linköping from 1216 to 1220. Killed by Estonian tribesmen in 1220, at Leal (Lihula).

Karl Sigtryggsson, *Boberg*. Son of Sigtrygg Bengtsson and a daughter of Magnus Minneskold. Married to Helena Pedersdotter.

Karl Sverkersson, *Sverkerska ätten*. Son of King Sverker the Elder of Sweden and Ulfhild Håkonsdotter. Married to Christine Stigsdatter in 1163. King of Sweden from 1161 to 1167, possibly king in Östergötland from 1158. Killed on Visingsö by Knut Eriksson or his servants in 1167. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Karl Sverkersson, *Sverkerska ätten*. Son of King Sverker Karlsson and an unknown wife or concubine, who married a daughter of King Sverre of Norway. Karl was killed in battle with the *baglar*, probably in 1198, when Sverre lost ground to them.

Karl Tjälvesson, *Fånöätten*. Little known of him, possibly identical with a *häradshövding* in Östbo, Småland.

Karl Ulfsson, *Folkungaätten*. Son of Jarl Ulf Fase. Unmarried. Carried out certain tasks for Birger Jarl after his father's death, but *Ek* says he was also suspected of poisoning another man. Left Sweden at some stage during the 1250s and became a Teutonic knight. He died fighting the Lithuanians in 1260, probably at the Battle of Durben, in which 150 knights were killed.

Katarina Bengtsdotter, *Folkungaättens lagmansgren*. Daughter of *Lagman* Bengt Magnusson of Ulvåsa and Sigrid 'den fagra'. Married Knut Jonsson.

Katarina Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Daughter of Birger Jarl Magnusson and Mechtilde of Holstein. By 1259 married to *Graf* Siegfried I of Anhalt.

Katarina Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Daughter of King Birger Magnusson and Margrete Eriksdatter. Died after 1320.

Katarina Eriksdotter, *Erikska ätten*. Daughter of King Erik Jedvardsson and (probably) Christine. Married first to Nils Blaka, possibly second to Magnus Broka.

Katarina Ingesdotter, *Stenkilätten*. Daughter of King Inge t.e. and Queen Helena, who married the Danish noble Bjørn Jernside.

Katarina Sunesdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of Sune Folkesson and Helena Sverkersdotter. Married to Erik Eriksson in 1243. After his death in 1250 retired to Gudhem Nunnery, where she died as abbess in c. 1252. Buried there.

Katarina Svantepolksdotter. Daughter of Svantepolk Knudsen and Bengta Sunesdotter. Became a nun in Vreta and succeeded her sister Ingrid as abbess. Died in 1329.

Katarina Valdemarsdotter, *Folkungaättens Valdemarsgren*. Daughter of King Valdemar Birgersson and Sofie Eriksdatter. Died in 1283.

Knud of Blekinge. Son of Valdemar II of Denmark and (probably) his mistress Helene Guttormsdotter (earlier wife of Esbern Snare). *Hertug* of Estonia in 1223, of Blekinge in 1232, and Lolland in 1249. Married 'Hedwig' of Pomerania. Died in 1260, buried in Ringsted Church.

Knud 'Lavard' ['Lord' or 'Breadgiver']. Son of King Erik Ejegod of Denmark and Bodil. Jarl of South Jylland (*Hertug* of Schleswig) 1115–31 and King of the Obodrites 1129–31, thereafter *Hertug* of Schleswig. Murdered at Haraldsted Skov by Magnus Nielsen in 1131. Canonised in 1169.

Knud VI Valdemarsen. Son of King Valdemar I of Denmark and Sofia Vladimirovna. Married Gertrud of Saxony in 1177. King of Denmark from 1182 to 1202. Adopted the title 'King of the Danes and Slavs' after 1185. Died in 1202, buried in Ringsted.

Knut Birgersson (**Knut Jarl**), *Folkungaätten*. Son of Birger Brosa and Brigiða Haraldsdotter. Married to Sigrid Knutsdotter. *Riksjarl*, either from 1202 to 1208 (under King Sverker, defecting to Erik Knutsson), or made jarl by Erik Knutsson in 1208. Killed at the Battle of Lena in 1208.

Knut Eriksson, *Erikska ätten*. Son of King Erik Jedvardsson and Christine Bjørnsdatter. Married to a high noblewoman, probably Cecilia Sverkersdotter. King of Sweden from 1167 to 1195/96. Died in 1195 or 1196. Buried in Varnhem Monastery.

Knut Gregersson, *Folkungaättens 'oäkta gren'*. Son of Gregers Birgersson and an uknown woman. Died in 1285.

Knut (**Holmgersson**) **'Långe' ['the Tall']**, *Erikska ätten*. Almost certainly son of Holmger Filipsson and an unknown mother. Probably married to Helena Pedersdatter. Usurped the throne in 1229, King of Sweden from 1229 to his death. Died in or possibly before 1234, buried at Sko Kloster.

Knut Jonsson, *Aspenäs ätten*. Son of Johan Filipson and Ingeborg Svantepolksdotter. Knight, King Birger Magnusson's *Drots* from 1311 to 1314, *Lagman* in Östergötland in 1315 and 1316 (possibly since 1310) and from 1330 to 1345 (1347?). Took part in a rebellion against King Birger in 1318. Died by March 1347. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Knut Kristinasson (**Knut Håkonsson**). Son of Jarl Håkon 'Galen' of Norway and Kristine Nilsdotter. Married Ingrid Skulesdotter in 1227. As leader of the *Ribbungar* faction after the death of Sigurd Ribbung in 1226, throne pretender in Norway in 1226–27, but subsequently supported Håkon Håkonsson. Died in 1261.

Knut Magnusson, *Folkungaätten*. Son of Magnus Broka. *Lagman* in Västergötland. 'Folkunga' rebel of 1251, as a result of which he was executed in the same year.

Kristina Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of Birger Brosa and (probably) Brigiða Haraldsdotter.

Kristina Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Daughter of Birger Jarl Magnusson and (probably) Ingeborg Eriksdotter. Unknown husband, from whom descended the *Ama* family.

Kristina Fastedotter. Married to Holmger Folkesson. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Kristina Ingesdotter. Daughter of King Inge t.e. Married to Mstislav (II), Prince of Kiev. Died c. 1122.

Kristine Nilsdotter. Daughter of Nils Blaka and Katarina Eriksdotter. First marriage to Jarl Håken 'Galen' of Norway, second marriage to *Lagman* Eskil Magnusson. Died c. 1254.

Kristina Tyrgilsdotter, *Tyrgils Knutssons ätt*. Daughter of *Marsk* Tyrgils Knutsson. Second wife of *Hertig* Valdemar Magnusson, married in 1302, but divorced by him in 1305.

Lars Filipsson, *Folkungaätten*. Son of Filip Jarl Birgersson and Ingebjørg Sverresdotter.

Lars Petersson. *Lagman* in Östergötland. Abducted Bengta Sunesdotter from Vreta Nunnery in 1244 and fled to Norway, where he died c. 1246.

Lars Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie. Killed at the Battle of Lena in 1208. Body returned to Denmark and buried in Sorø Monastery.

Lars Ulfsson, *Ama ätt*. Son of Ulf Holmgersson and Cecilia Haraldsdotter. Married in c. 1301 to Ramborg Nilsdotter, and by 1318 to Ingrid Anundsdotter. Became a knight between 1312 and 1314, and a member of the council of the realm from 1322. *Lagman* in Södermanland. Died after 1350 and buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Leonor of Portugal. Daughter of King Affonso II of Portugal and Urraca of Castile. Married to Valdemar (III) Valdemarsen of Denmark in 1229. Died in 1231, buried in Ringsted Church.

Lidinvärd Ödesson, *'Örnfot'*. *Lagman* of Närke from c. 1302–1312, married to Margareta, granddaughter of Birger Jarl.

Liutgard of Holstein. Daughter of *Graf* Gerhard I of Holstein-Itzehoe and Elisabeth of Mecklenburg. The first wife of *Furst* Albrecht I of Anhalt-Zerbst. Died after 1289.

Magnus Algotsson. *Algotsönnernas ätt*. Son of Algot Brynolfsson. Little known of him, except that he was imprisoned for killing the Norwegian Ragvald Mule.

Magnus Bengtsson, *Folkungaättens 'lagmansgren'*. Illegitimate son of Bishop Bengt Magnusson. Married a certain Ragnhild. First named in 1247, *Lagman* of Östergötland and *fogde* of Kalmar Castle until his death in 1263.

Magnus 'Berrføtt' ['Barelegs']. Son of King Harald 'Hardråde' and his mistress Tora Torbergsdotter. King of Norway from 1095 to 1103, when he was killed in battle in Ireland. Married Margareta 'Fredkulla' c. 1101.

Magnus Birgersson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of King Birger Magnusson and Margareta Eriksdotter. Executed in 1320.

Magnus Birgersson 'Ladulås' ['Barn-lock'], *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Birger Jarl Magnusson and Ingeborg Eriksdotter. Married to Hedwig of Holstein in 1276. *Hertig* of Södermanland, King of Sweden from 1274 to 1290. Became ill and died on Visingsö in 1290. Buried in Riddarholm Church, Stockholm.

Magnus 'Broka', *Folkungaätten*. Son of Knut Jarl Birgersson and Sigrid Knutsdotter. Married to Katarina Eriksdotter. He probably died earlier, but one source lists him as one of the rebels of 1251 executed by Birger Jarl. Otherwise, the latest record of him is from 1230.

Magnus Eriksson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Born in 1316, son of *Hertig* Erik Magnusson and Ingebjørg Håkonsdotter. Married to Blanche of Namur. King of Sweden from 1320 to 1363, King of Norway from 1320 to 1344. Deposed as king of Sweden in 1363. Drowned near Bergen in 1374. Buried in Varnhem Abbey.

Magnus Gregersson, *Folkungaättens 'oäkta gren'*. Son of Gregers Birgersson. Married Ragnhild Erlandsdotter. Died after 1319.

Magnus Henriksen, Son of Henrik Skadelår and Ingrid Ragvaldsdotter. Married Brigiða Haraldsdotter. King of Sweden 1160–61. Overthrew and killed King Erik Jedvardsson in 1160, but was himself killed by Karl Sverkersson's men in 1161.

Magnus Johansson, *Ängel ätten*. Son of Johan Ängel t.e. and a daughter of Folke Jarl. Knight, member of Magnus Ladulås's council, founder of the House of the Holy Spirit in Uppsala. Died in 1294, as the last male member of the family. Buried in Sko Kloster.

Magnus Knutsson. Son of Knut (unknown lineage) and an unnamed daughter of Sigtrygg Bengtsson (*Boberg*).

Magnus 'Lagabøter' ['Law-improver'], *Sverres ætt*. Son of Håkon IV Håkonsson and Margarete Skulesdotter. Married Ingeborg, daughter of King Erik Plovpenning of Denmark. Joint king of Norway in 1257, sole king of Norway from 1263 to 1280, when he died.

Magnus Minnesköld, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Bengt Snivel and an unknown woman. Must have been married more than once, Ingrid Ylva being his second or third wife. Possibly died at the Battle of Lena in 1208, or even Gestilren in 1210.

Magnus Nielsen. Son of King Niels of Denmark and Margareta Fredkulla. Married to Rycheza of Poland. Possibly chosen as king of Sweden by the *västgötar* as early as 1125, and then of all Sweden in 1130–31, but deposed in favour of Sverker t.e. Died after the battle of Fotevik in 1134.

'Malmfrid' (Mstislavna) of Kiev, *Rurikid*. A daughter of Prince Mstislav Vladimirovich and Kristina Ingesdotter. Married first King Sigurd 'Jorsalfare' of Norway († 1130), then King Erik Emune of Denmark († 1137). Died after 1137.

Margareta Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten*. Daughter of Birger Brosa and (possibly) Brigiða Haraldsdotter.

Margareta Eriksdotter, *Erikska ätten*. Daughter of King Erik Jedvardsson and (probably) Christine Bjørnsdatter. Married to King Sverre Sigurdson of Norway.

Margareta 'Fredkulla' ['Peace-woman']. Daughter of King Inge t.e. of Sweden and Helena. Married to Magnus Berrføtt of Norway as part of a peace agreement, and later married the Danish king Niels Svensen.

Margareta Magnusdotter, *Folkungaättens 'lagmansgren'*. Daughter of *Lagman* Magnus Bengtsson and Ragnhild. Died in 1275.

Margareta Magnusdotter, *Ängel ätten*. Daughter of Magnus Johansson and Ingeborg Nilsdotter. Married Peter Israelsson.

Margareta Pedersdotter, *'Lejon'?*. Probably daughter of Peter Näf, *Lagman* of Västergötland. Married to *Lagman* Algot Brynolfsson.

Margareta Valdemarsdotter, *Folkungättens Valdemarsgren*. Daughter of King Valdemar Birgersson and Sofie Eriksdatter. A nun in Skänninge Convent in 1288.

Margrete Christoffersdatter. Daughter of Christoffer I of Denmark and Margrete Sambiria. Married to Johann II, *Graf* of Holstein-Kiel, in 1276. Died in Preetz in 1306.

Margrete Eriksdatter. Daughter of King Erik 'Glipping' of Denmark and Agnes of Brandenburg. Married to King Birger Magnusson of Sweden in 1298, queen of Sweden until 1319. Died in 1321, buried in Ringsted Church.

Margrete Sunesdatter, *Hvide-slægt*. Daughter of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie. Married a certain Herluf. Ancestors of Peder Bang, Bishop of Roskilde, and Jakob Erlandsen and Jens Grand, Archbishops of Lund, who caused many problems for Danish kings from 1250 to 1320.

Marina Valdemarsdotter, *Folkungaättens Valdemarsgren*. Daughter of King Valdemar Birgersson and Sofie Eriksdatter. Married to Rudolf of Diepholz in c. 1285. Died after 1299.

Mathilde of Brandenburg, *Askanier*. Daughter of *Markgraf* Albrecht II of Brandenburg and Mathilde of Lensberg (*Wettin*). Married Otto of Lüneberg (later *Herzog* of Brunswick) in 1228. Died in 1261.

Mats Kättilmundsson. Leading supporter and 'hövitsman' for the *Hertigar* Erik and Valdemar Birgersson in the period 1302–1317, one of the leaders of the revolt against King Birger in 1318. Appointed *drots* of the realm in Ingebjørg's service in 1318. Resigned in 1319, after Magnus Eriksson's election as king, but continued as a council member and as *hövitsman* in Finland. Died in 1326, probably in Åbo.

Mechtild Christoffersdatter. Daughter of King Christoffer I of Denmark and Margrete Sambiria. Married to *Markgraf* Albrecht III of Brandenburg between 1269 and 1271. Died in 1299 or 1300, buried in Kloster Lehnin.

Mechtilde of Holstein. Daughter of *Graf* Adolf IV of Holstein and Hedwig von der Lippe. In 1237 married King Abels of Denmark († 1252), in 1261 married Birger Jarl Magnusson († 1266). Died in 1288. Buried in Varnhem Monastery.

Mstislav Vladimirovich, *Rurikid*. Son of Vladimir Monomakh, Prince of Kiev, and Gytha of Wessex. Prince of Novgorod from 1088–1117, Prince of Pereiaslavl from 1117 to 1125, then Prince of Kiev until 1132. Married first

Kristina Ingesdotter († c. 1122), then Liubava Dmitrovna († c. 1168). Died in 1132. Mstislav had at least ten children. Only the daughters who married Scandinavian nobles are listed in the tree: in addition, Eupraxia was married to Emperor Alexius Komnenos of Byzantium, and Maria, Rogneda and Xenia were all married to Russian princes.

Niels Nielsen. Son of Niels Valdemarsen and Oda of Schwerin. *Hertug* of South Halland after his father. Married Cecilie Jensdatter. Died c. 1251, buried in Sorø Abbey.

Niels Svensen. Married Margrete Ingesdatter in c. 1085, and later married Ulfhild. King of Denmark from 1104 to 1134. Murdered in Schleswig in 1134, buried in Schleswig Cathedral.

Niels Valdemarsen. Son of Valdemar II of Denmark and an unnamed mistress. Granted the 'comitatum' of (North) Halland in 1218. Married Oda of Schwerin, probably in 1217.

Nikolaus of Werle. Son of Johann I, lord of Werle (in Mecklenburg), and Sophie of Landau-Ruppin. Married Rickiza Eriksdatter at some time between 1291 and 1302. Died in 1306.

Osa (**Ossa**) **Nielsdatter**, *Peck slægt*. Daughter of Niels Tokesen (Peck) and Christine Jensdatter. Married *Marsk* Stig (Andersen) Hvide. Died in 1260.

Ottar Birting. Powerful Norwegian landowner and friend of King Inge after King Harald Gille's murder. Married Harald's queen Ingrid. Murdered c. 1140, possibly at the instigation of King Sigurd Slembe.

Otto (**Otto I 'das Kind'**). Son of Wilhelm of Lüneberg and Helene Valdemarsdatter. Created *Herzog* of Brunswick and Lüneberg in 1235. Married Mathilde of Brandenburg in 1228. Died in 1252, buried in Brunswick Cathedral.

Otto I. Son of Barnim I of Pomerania and Mechtild of Brandenburg. After his father's death in 1278 shared his inheritance with his half-brother Bogislaw V and his brother Barnim II, and after an agreement in 1294 ruled 'Pomerania-Stettin' (Bogislaw ruled Wolgast). Married Katherine of Holstein, daughter of Ingeborg Valdemarsdotter. Died in 1344.

Peder Ebbesen, *Hvide slægt*. Son of Ebbe Skjalmsen and an unknown woman. Inherited Knardrup, rebelled against Erik Plovpenning.

Peder Strangesen, *Ulfeldt*. Probably son of the Danish King Valdemar I's *staller* Strange. Married a daughter of Esbern Snare, possibly Ingeborg. Died in 1241.

Peder Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Born in 1161, died in 1214. Bishop of Roskilde from 1191 to his death. *Kansler* of King Knud in 1201. According to Danish sources, present at the Battle of Lena in 1208, where two of his brothers fell.

Peter Algotsson, *Algotsönnernas ätt*. Son of *Lagman* Algot Brynolfsson. Knight and Magnus Ladulås's *kansler*, implicated in his brother's abduction of Ingrid Svantepolksdotter from Vreta and fled to Norway in 1288, where he became *kansler* of King Erik 'Prästhatare'.

Peter Ragnvaldsson, *'Tre Rutor' ätt*. Son of Ragnvald, married to Birgitta Jonsdotter by mid-1325. Knight and councillor of the realm. Last mentioned in a source of 1326.

Philippe 'Auguste', *Capet*. Son of King Louis VII of France and his third wife Alix of Champagne. King of France from 1180 to 1223. Married Isabel of Hainault († 1190) in 1180, and Ingeborg Valdemarsdatter of Denmark in 1193, but repudiated her and later bigamously married Agnes of Andechs-Morano († 1201) in 1196. Under papal pressure forced to restore Ingeborg to the queenship in 1213. Died in 1223 and buried in the Church of the Abbey of Saint-Denis.

Przemysł II, *Piast*. Son of Przemysł I and Elisabeth of Silesia. Married first Liutgard of Mecklenburg (murdered in 1283), second, in 1285, Rikissa Valdemarsdotter of Sweden, and in 1293, after her death, Margareta of Brandenburg. Prince of Poland from 1290 to 1295, King in 1295. Murdered in Rogoźno in 1296, buried in Poznan Cathedral.

Ragnhild, *unknown lineage*. Wife of *Lagman* Magnus Bengtsson. Died in 1262.

Ragnhild Erlandsdotter, *Finsta ätten*. Daughter of Erland Israelsson. Married to Magnus Gregersson.

Ragnvald 'Knaphövde' ['Smallhead'—short of brains?]. Probably a short-lived king chosen by the *svear* in the uncertain period between the death of Inge t.y. and the accession of Magnus Nielsen in Västergötland (c. 1125–30). Recorded as killed by the *västgötar* because he arrived at their *ting* to be confirmed as king without *gisslan*.

Ragvald Ingesson, *Stenkil ätt*. Son of King Inge the Elder. Possibly identical with Ragnvald 'Knaphövde'.

Ramborg Israelsdotter, *And ätten*. Daughter of Israel Andersson and Ramfrid. Married to Karl Gregersson and later Peter Ragvaldsson. Died after 1325.

Ramborg Nilsdotter, *unknown lineage*. Married to Lars Ulfsson.

Ramfrid Hafridsdotter. Daughter of Gustav and Hafrid Sigtryggsdotter (*Boberg*).

Rickiza Eriksdatter. Daughter of Erik 'Glipping' and Agnes of Brandenburg. Married to Nikolaus of Werle between 1291 and 1301. Died c. 1308.

Rickiza Valdemarsdatter. Daughter of King Valdemar I of Denmark and Sofia Vladimirovna. Married in 1210 to King Erik Knutsson. Died in 1220. Buried in Ringsted Monastery.

Rikissa Birgersdotter, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Daughter of Birger Jarl Magnusson and Ingeborg Eriksdotter. Married Heinrich of Werle-Gustrow in 1262. Died in c. 1288.

Rikissa Magnusdotter, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Daughter of Magnus Ladulås and Hedwig of Holstein. Became abbess of St Klara Nunnery. Died in 1348.

Rikissa Valdemarsdotter, *Folkungaättens Valdemarsgren*. Daughter of King Valdemar Birgersson and Sofie Eriksdatter. Married to Przemysł, Prince of Greater Poland, in 1285, as his second wife. Died between 1288 and 1293.

Rörik Algotsson, *Algotsönnernas ätt*. Son of Algot Brynolfsson. Dispossessed of many of his holdings and imprisoned after his brother's abduction of Ingrid Svantepolksdotter in 1288. His daughters got some of them back after both married *lagmän*.

Rörik Birgersson, *Rörik Birgerssons ätt*. Son of Birger Röriksson and an unnamed woman. Married to Helga Anundsdotter. Knight of the late thirteenth-early fourteenth century, member of king's council in 1310.

Rostislav Mstislavich, *Rurikid*. Son of Kristina Ingesdotter and Mstislav I of Kiev. Prince of Smolensk 1125–60, Prince of Novgorod temporarily in 1153, and Prince of Kiev temporarily in 1154, and 1159–67.

Rudolf of Diepholz. Member of Lower Saxon family that included a number of bishops, but parentage uncertain. Recorded as having married Marina Valdemarsdotter in 1285. Died in 1303.

Rudolf III, *Habsburg*. Son of King Albrecht I of Germany and Elisabeth of Görz (Tyrol). *Herzog* of Austria and Styria from 1298 to 1307, and King of Bohemia from 1306 to 1307. Married Blanche of France († 1305) in 1300, and Elźbieta Rycheza of Poland in 1306–07. Died in Horazdiowitz in 1307, buried in Prague.

Rycheza of Poland, *Piast*. Daughter of Duke Boleslav 'Krzywousty' ['Wrymouth']

of Poland and Pomerania and his second wife Salome of Berg-Schelkingen. Married in 1127 to Magnus Nielsen, then (after 1136) to Prince Volodar of Minsk, and finally to King Sverker t.e. of Sweden at some date after 1143. Died after 1155. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Rycheza Elźbieta of Poland. Daughter of Przemysł II, Prince of Poland, and Elisabeth of Silesia. Married to King Václav II of Bohemia in 1303, *Herzog* Rudolf of Austria and Styria (later King of Bohemia) in 1306, and Heinrich of Lippe in 1315. Died in Hradec Kralove (Königgrätz) in 1335 and buried in Brno.

Sambiria (known as **Margrete** in Denmark). Daughter of Sambor III, Prince (*Herzog*) of Pomerania and Mechtild of Mecklenburg. Married to King Christoffer Valdemarsen of Denmark. Died in 1282, buried in Doberan Abbey.

Siegfried III of Orlamünde, *Askanier*. Son of *Graf* Hermann I of Orlamünde and Irmgard (unknown lineage). Married Sofie Valdemarsdatter of Denmark in 1181. *Graf* of Orlamünde from 1176 to his death in 1206.

Sigrid 'den Fagra' ['the Fair'], *unknown lineage*. Married to *Lagman* Bengt Magnusson. Died in 1289.

Sigrid Knutsdotter, *Erikska ätt*. Daughter of King Knut Eriksson and (probably) Cecilia Sverkersdotter. Married to Knut Jarl Birgersson.

Sigrid Magnusdotter, *Folkungaättens 'lagmansgren'*. Daughter of *Lagman* Magnus Bengtsson and Ragnhild. Buried in Skānninge Nunnery.

Sigtrygg Bengtsson, *Boberg*. Son of Bengt Matsson and an unknown woman. His second wife was an unnamed daughter of Magnus Minneskold. Died in 1219.

Sigurd 'Jorsalfare' ['Jerusalem-farer']. Son of Magnus Berrføtt and a mistress. In 1116–18 married 'Malmfrid' of Kiev, having previously been married to an Irishwoman, Biadmuin, supposedy a daughter of King Muikertach. Said to have been insane for some time before his death in 1130.

Skjalm 'Hvide' ('the White'), *Hvide-slægt*. Died before 1125. Son of Toke Palnesen, whose baptism, and that of his son, probably explain the origin of the name 'Hvide' (from 'White Christ').

Sofia Eriksdotter, *Erikska ätten*. Daughter of King Erik Knutsson, married to Heinrich Borwin of Mecklenburg. Died in 1241.

Sofia (Vladimirovna) of Minsk, *Rurikid*. Daughter of Prince Volodar (Vladimir) of Minsk and Rycheza of Poland. Married King Valdemar I of Denmark († 1182) in 1156 and *Landgraf* Ludwig III of Thuringia in 1184 (divorced in 1187). Died in 1198, buried in Ringsted Monastery.

Sofie Andersdatter, *Hvide-slægt*. Daughter of Andreas Tokesen. Married Peder Saxesen (*Vendelbo*).

Sofie Eriksdatter. Daughter of King Erik 'Plovpenning' ['Ploughpenny'] of Denmark and Jutta of Saxony. Married King Valdemar Birgersson of Sweden (deposed 1274) in 1260. Divorced at some time after Valdemar lost his kingdom. Died in 1286.

Sofie Valdemarsdatter. Daughter of Valdemar I of Denmark and Sofia Vladimirovna. Married to *Graf* Siegfried III of Orlamünde († 1206) in Lübeck in 1181. Became a nun after his death. Died in 1208.

Sofie Valdemarsdatter. Daughter of King Valdemar II of Denmark and Berenguela of Portugal. Married to *Markgraf* Johann I of Brandenburg. Died in Flensburg in 1247, buried in the Franciscan Abbey of Ribe.

Sophie of Orlamünde, *Askanier*. Daughter of *Graf* Siegfried III of Orlamünde and Sofie Valdemarsdatter of Denmark. Married *Graf* Lambert of Gleichen. Died in 1244.

Staffan Röriksson, *Staffansönernas ätt*. Son of an otherwise unknown Rörik and an unknown woman. Lagman of Södermanland after c. 1309. Married Kristina Knutsdotter. Died after 1344.

Stenkil. Probably son of Ragnvald Ulfsson, a jarl in Västergötland. Married first to Astrid Nilsdotter and secondly to a daughter of King Emund t.e, who was also his stepfather. King of Sweden from 1061 to 1066. Installed a bishop temporarily in Sigtuna. Died in 1066.

Stig Tokesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Toke Skjalmsen and Gyda. Married Margrete Knudsdatter. Died at Viborg in 1151.

Stig Andersen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Andreas Tokesen. Married Osa Nielsdatter. *Marsk* of Denmark under Kings Christoffer and Erik Glipping, in whose murder he was implicated (1286). Took part in Erik's campaigns in Sweden during the 1270s. Died in 1293.

Sune Ebbesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Ebbe Skjalmsen and Ragnhild. Married Cecilie. Initially a supporter of Sven Grade, but went over to Valdemar Knudsen (later Valdemar I). Died c. 1188.

Sune Folkesson, *Folkungaätten*. Son of Folke Jarl Birgersson and (probably) Ulfhild. Married to Helena Sverkersdotter, whom he may have abducted from Vreta Nunnery. Died in 1247, buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Sune Sik, *Sverkerska ätten*. Son of Sverker t.e. according to Olaus Petri, who perhaps confused the name. Father of Ingrid Ylva.

Svantepolk Knudsen, *Skarholmsätten*. Son of *Hertug* Knud Valdemarsen of Blekinge and Hedwig of Pomerania. Married Benedikta Sunesdotter in 1253, and after her death (1260s) a daughter of Ernst of Gleichen. Already a knight when first recorded as in Sweden, in 1253. Member of king's council in 1288 and still in 1305. Between 1293 and 1305 became *Lagman* of Östergötland. Died in 1310.

Sverker 'the Elder' (**Kolsson**), *Sverkerska ätten*. Probably son of a certain Kol. Married first to Ulfhild, then to Rycheza of Poland after her death. King of Sweden from c. 1132 to 1156. Murdered on Christmas Day 1156, supposedly by one of his own retinue. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Sverker 'the Younger' Karlsson, *Sverkerska ätten*. Son of King Karl Sverkersson and Christine Stigsdatter. Married (while king) to Ingegärd Birgersdotter and Benedikte Sunesdotter, probably in that order. King of Sweden from 1195–96 to 1208, when he was deposed. Killed at the Battle of Lena in 1210, during his second attempt to regain the kingship. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Sverre Sigurdson, *Sverres ætt*. Claimed to be a son of the Norwegian king Sigurd 'Munn'. Married to Margareta Eriksdotter. Rebel leader of the *birkibeinar* ['birchlegs'] from 1176 to 1184, when he became undisputed king. Remained king until his death in 1202, despite several rebellions.

Sviatoslava. Probable name of a daughter of Prince Sviatoslav of Chernigov who married Vsevelod Mstislavich.

Toke Skjalmsen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Skjalm Hvide. Died before 1150.

Toke Stigsen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Stig Tokesen and Margrete Knudsdatter. Unknown wife. Died in 1214.

Torben Sunesen, *Hvide-slægt*. Son of Sune Ebbesen and Cecilie. *Hövitsman* of the royal castle Søborg (Copenhagen). Died in 1198.

Tune Anundsson, *'Ving' ätten*. Son of Anund Tunesson (executed in 1280) and an unknown woman. Second husband of Ingeborg Svantepolksdotter. Last mentioned in 1293.

Tyrgils (**Törgils, Torkel**) **Knutsson**. Son of one Knut (of unknown lineage) and a daughter of Sigtrygg Bengtsson (*Boberg*). Married first to an unnamed

woman, second to Birgitta (unknown lineage), thirdly, in 1303, to Hedwig of Ravensburg. Knighted in 1289, *Marsk* under Kings Magnus Ladulås and Birger Magnusson, regent during Birger's minority from 1290 to 1304. Imprisoned in 1305 and executed in 1306. Buried in Riddarholm Church (of the Franciscan Priory), Stockholm.

Ulf Holmgersson, *Ama ätten*. Son of Holmger Folkesson and Kristina Fastesdotter. Married before 1278 to Cecilia Haraldsdotter, and in 1284 to Helena, granddaughter of Birger Jarl. A knight by 1276 and member of council of the realm in 1288. Died some time after 1290.

Ulf Jarl 'Gamla' ['the Elder'], *lineage uncertain, possibly Sverkerska ätten*. May have been a son of Johan Sverkersson, King Sverker t.e.'s eldest son. Jarl of unspecified regions and ally of King Sverker t.e.

Ulf Jarl Karlsson (**'Ulf Fase'**), *Folkungaätten*. Son of Jarl Karl Döve and an unknown mother. Possibly married to a daughter of Folke Jarl (Katarina?), possibly to a daughter of Johan Ängel t.e. *Riksjarl*, possibly following his father's death in 1220, certainly during the reign of Knut Långe and Erik Eriksson's second reign. Died in 1248.

Ulf Karlsson, *Ulv ätten*. Son of Karl Karlsson. Knight and one of Magnus Ladulås's foremost counsellors. Died in 1281, buried in Skänninge Convent. He and his descendants are known as the *Ulv ätten*.

Ulfhild. Married first to King Niels of Denmark († 1134), then to King Sverker t.e. Credited with a major part in his monastic foundations by the Cistercian *Exordium Magnum*. Buried in Alvastra Monastery.

Ulfhild Magnusdotter, *Folkungaättens 'lagmansgren'*. Daughter of *Lagman* Magnus Bengtsson and Ragnhild. Married first to Bengt Magnusson (not known to be related), then to Birger Filipsson.

Václav II, *Přemyslid*. Son of King Přemysl II Otakar of Bohemia and Kunigunde of Halicz. Married in 1285 to Guta of Habsburg († 1297), and in 1303 to Rycheza Elźbieta of Poland. King of Bohemia after 1283, King of Poland from 1300 to 1302, *Markgraf* of Moravia. Died in 1305.

Valdemar Birgersson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Son of Birger Jarl Magnusson and Ingeborg Eriksdotter. Married to Sofie Valdemarsdatter of Denmark in 1252. King of Sweden from 1250 to 1274. Deposed by his brothers Magnus and Erik in 1274, later imprisoned, probably in 1290, after Magnus Ladulås's death. Died in 1302.

Valdemar Eriksen. Son of King Erik Glipping and Agnes of Brandenburg. Died in 1304, buried in Sorø Abbey.

Valdemar Eriksson, *Folkungaättens Valdemarsgren*. Son of Erik Valdemarsson and Ingeborg Knutsdotter. Married first Ingegärd Karlsdotter, second Helga Anundsdotter. Probably died in the early 1270s.

Valdemar Knudsen 'the Great'. Born 1131, son of Knud Lavard, Jarl of South Jylland, and 'Ingeborg' of Rus. Married Sofia Vladimirovna of Minsk. King of Denmark from 1157 to 1182. Died in 1182 in Vordingborg, buried in Ringsted Monastery.

Valdemar II 'Sejr' ['the Conqueror']. Son of King Valdemar I of Denmark and Sofia Vladimirovna. *Hertug* of Schleswig in 1188, King of Denmark from 1202 to 1241. Married 'Dagmar' of Bohemia († 1212) in 1205 and Berenguela of Portugal in 1214. Died in 1241. Buried in Ringsted Monastery.

Valdemar III of Schleswig. Son of King Abel of Denmark and Mechtild of Holstein. Made *Hertug* of Schleswig in 1254. Died in 1257.

Valdemar Magnusson, *Folkungaätten* (*Bjälbo*). Third son of Magnus Ladulås and Hedwig of Holstein. *Hertig* of Finland in 1303. Married a daughter of Tyrgils Knutsson in 1302, whom he later divorced on grounds of relationship by baptism (Tyrgils had taken him to be baptised). In 1312 married Ingebjørg Eriksdotter. Died a prisoner after the feast of Nyköping of 1317.

Valdemar Valdemarsen. Son of Valdemar II of Denmark and Dagmar of Bohemia. Crowned joint king of Denmark in 1218 ('Valdemar III "den Unge"'). Imprisoned from 1223 to 1226. Died in a hunting accident near Kalundborg in 1231, buried in Ringsted Church.

Vladimir Mstislavich, *Rurikid*. Son of Prince Mstislav Vladimirovich and Kristina Ingesdotter, died after 1136.

Vsevelod Mstislavich, *Rurikid.* Son of Mstislav of Kiev and Kristina Ingesdotter. Prince of Novgorod 1113–36, Prince of Pskov 1137–38. Proclaimed patron saint of Pskov after his death. Married to a daughter of Prince Sviatoslav of Kiev. Died in 1138.

Wilhelm of Lüneberg, *Welfen*. Son of *Herzog* Heinrich 'der Löwe' and his second wife Mathilda of England. *Herzog* of Lüneberg from 1208 to 1213. Married Helene Valdemarsdatter in 1202. Died in 1213, buried in St Michael's Church, Lüneberg.

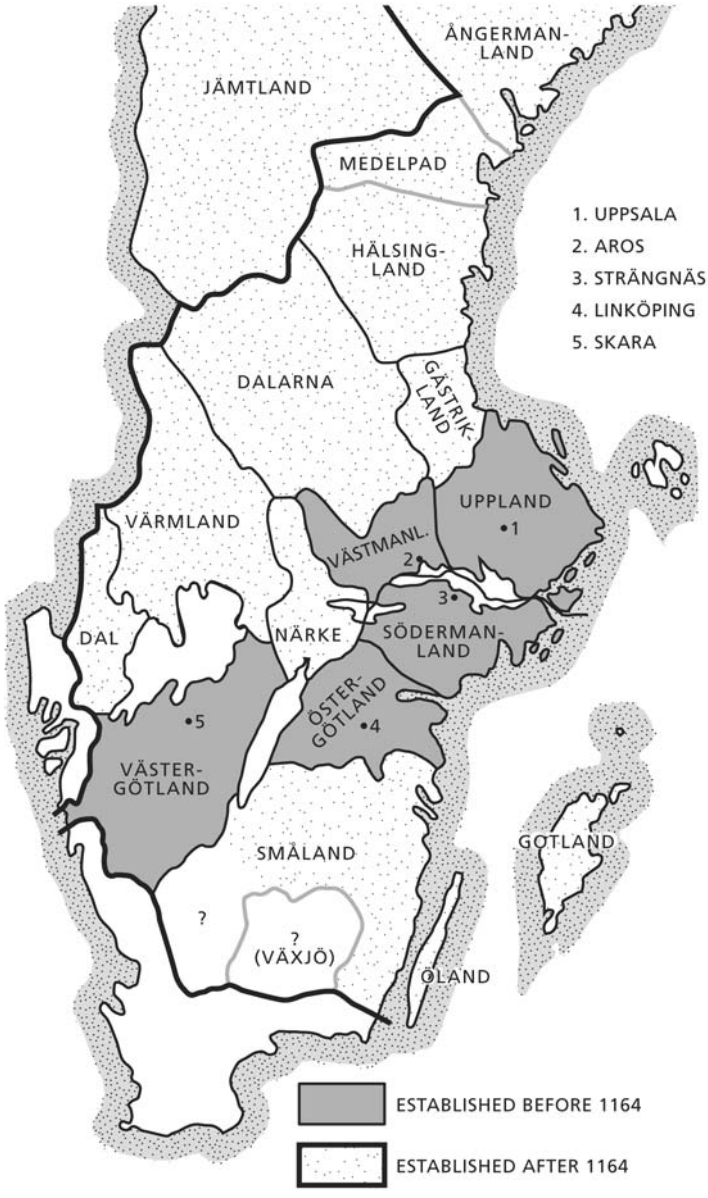
Kings of Norway 1103–1319

Sigurd 'Jorsalfare' (*Jerusalem-farer*)	King	1103–1130	n	
Magnus Sigurdsson 'Blinde' (*the Blind*)	King	1130–1135	u	
Harald 'Gille' (from Irish 'gille-christ', *Servant of Christ*)	King	1130–1136	u	
Sigurd 'Slembe' (*the Wicked*)	King	1136–1139	n	
Inge 'Krokrygg' (*Crookback*)	King	1136–1161	u	
Sigurd 'Munn' (*the Mouth*)	King	1136–1155	u	
Øystein Haraldsson	King	1142–1157	u	
Håkon Sigurdsson Herdebrei (*the Broad-shouldered*)	King	1159–1162	u	
Magnus Erlingsson	King	1161–1184	u	
Sigurd Sigurdsson 'Markusfostre' (*foster-son of Markus*)	Pretender	1163–1164	u	
Øystein Øysteinsson 'Møyla' (*the Maiden/girl*)	Pretender	1174–1177	u	*bi*
Sverre Sigurdsson	King	1177–1202	n	*bi*
Jon Ingesson 'Kuvlung' (*Cowl-man*)	Pretender	1185–1188	u	*ba*
Sigurd Magnusson	Pretender	1193–1194	u	*ba*
Inge Magnusson	Pretender	1196–1202	u	*ba*
Håkon Sverresson	King	1202–1204	n	*bi*
Guttorm Sigurdsson	Pretender	1204	n	*ba*
Erling Magnusson 'Steinvegg' (*Stonewall*)	Pretender	1204–1207	n	*ba*
Inge Bårdsson	King	1204–1217	n	*bi*
Filip Simonsson	King	1207–1217	n	*ba*
Skule Bårdsson	Pretender	1239–1240	n	
Håkon Håkonsson 'Gamla' (*the Old*)	King	1217–1263	n	
Magnus Håkonsson 'Lagabøter' (*Law-improver*)	King	1263–1280	n	
Erik Magnusson 'Præstehadar' (*the Priesthater*)	King	1280–1299	n	
Håkon Magnusson	King	1299–1319	n	

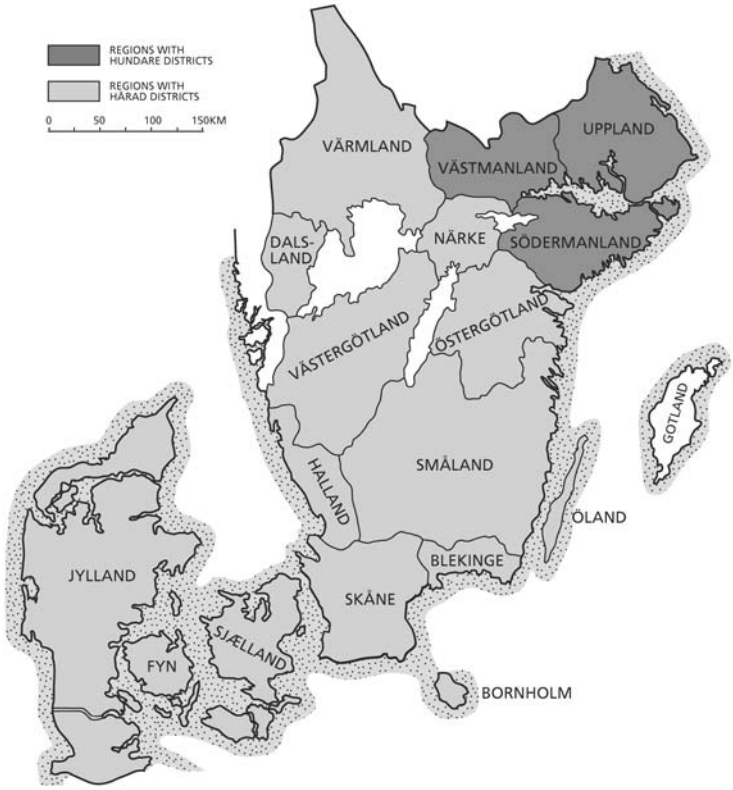
n = natural death
u = 'unnatural' death, murdered or killed in battle
d = driven from throne
bi = 'birkibeinar' faction (*birchlegs*)
ba = 'baglar' faction (*croziers*)

Note: All those listed as 'Pretender' were chosen as king in one or other region, but never succeeded in being accepted by all of Norway as king in any region.

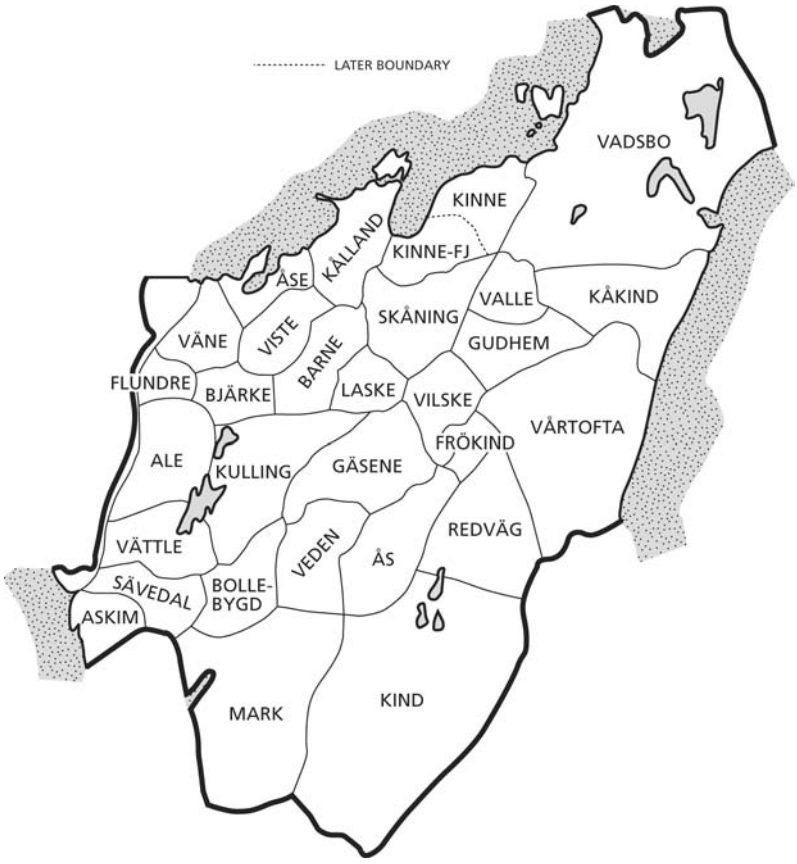
MAPS



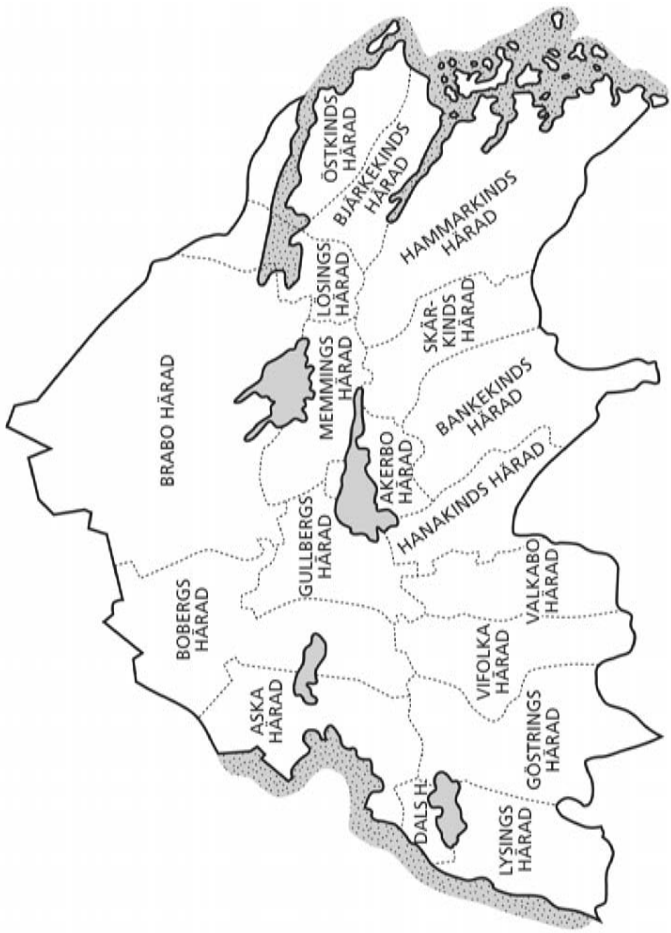
Map 1. The dioceses of Sweden. Adapted from Smedberg, 1982.



Map 2. *Härad* and *hundare*-division in Medieval Sweden and Denmark. Adapted from T. Andersson, 1982.



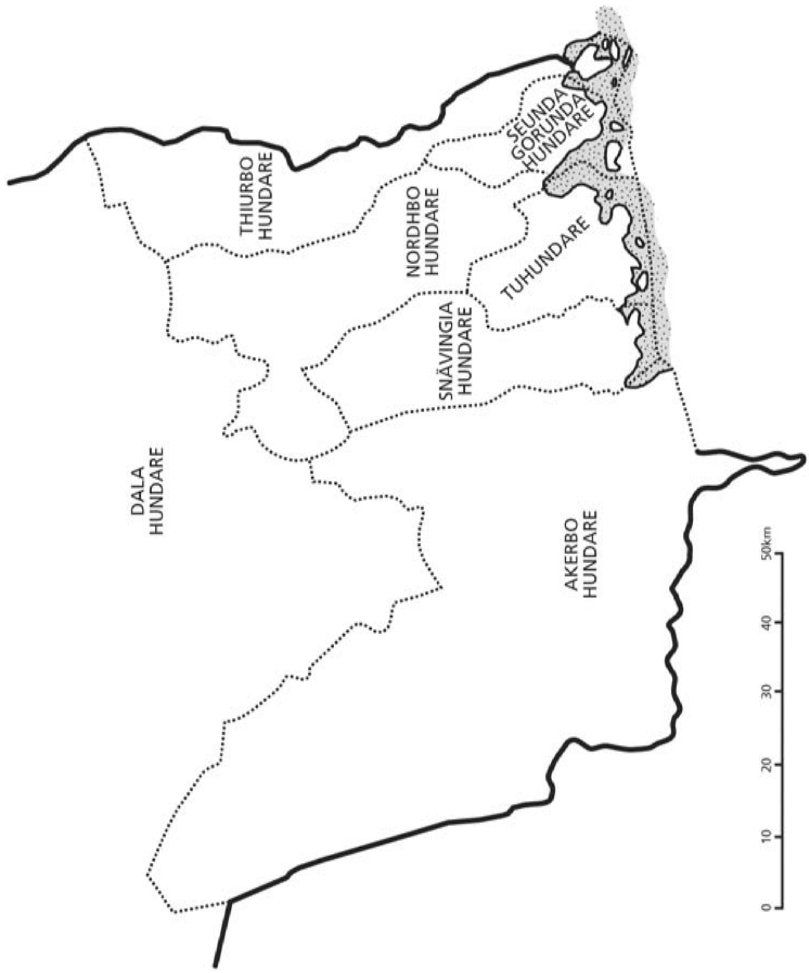
Map 3. *Härader* in Västergötland. Adapted from Klackenberg, 1985.



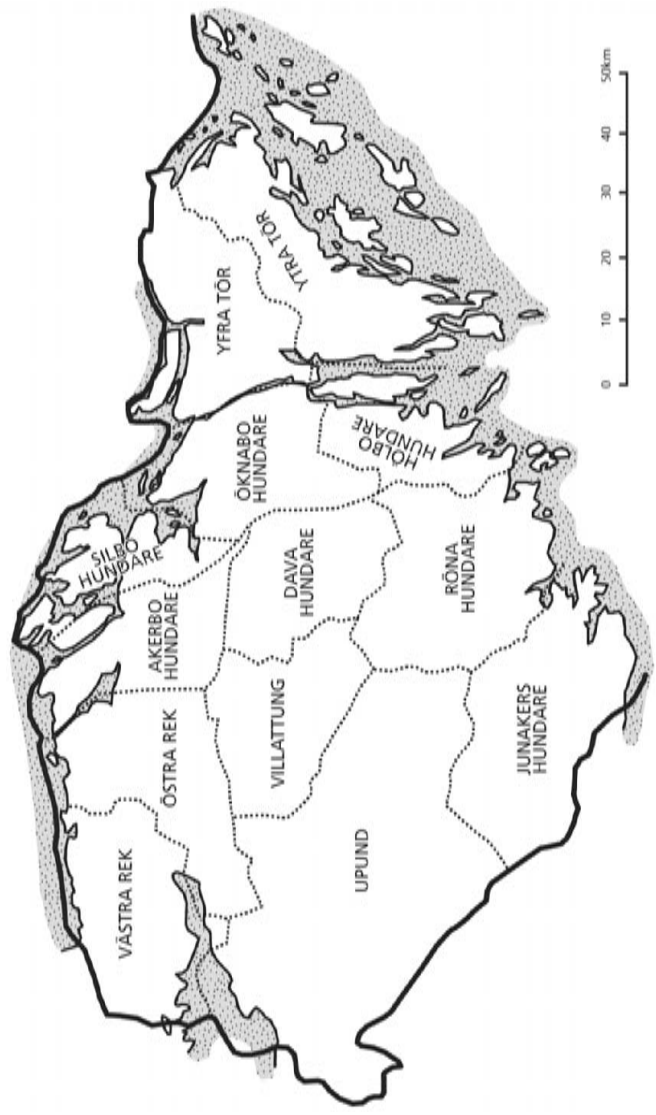
Map 4. *Härader* in Östergötland. Adapted from T. Andersson, 1982.



Map 5. *Hundare* and *folkland* in Uppland. Adapted from *Atlas över Sverige*.



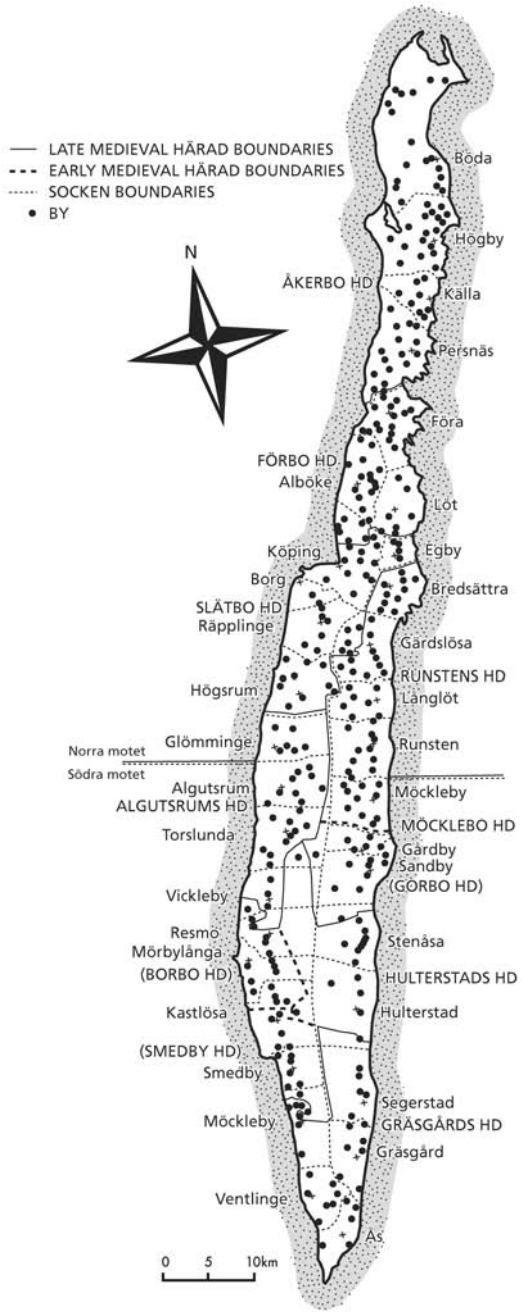
Map 6. Västmanland's *hundare*. Adapted from *Atlas över Sverige*.



Map 7. Södermanland's *hundare*. Adapted from *Atlas över Sverige*.



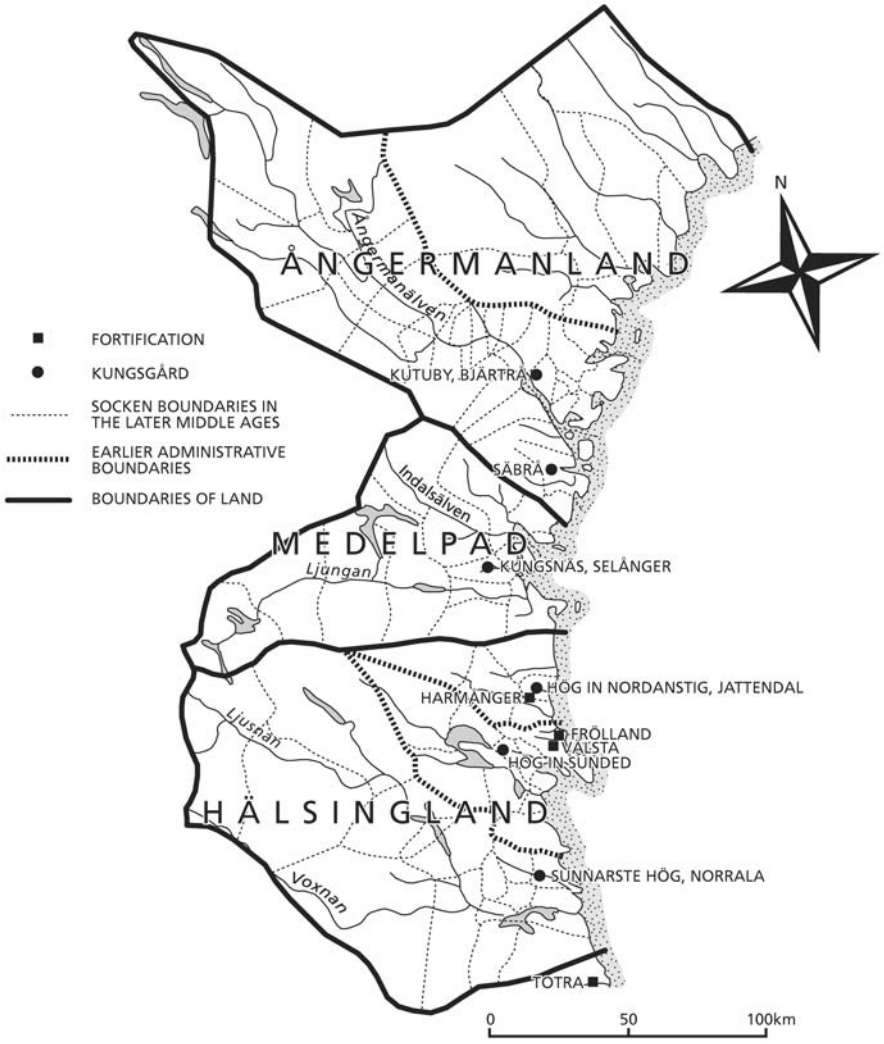
Map 8. *Härader* in Närke. Adapted from *Atlas över Sverige*.



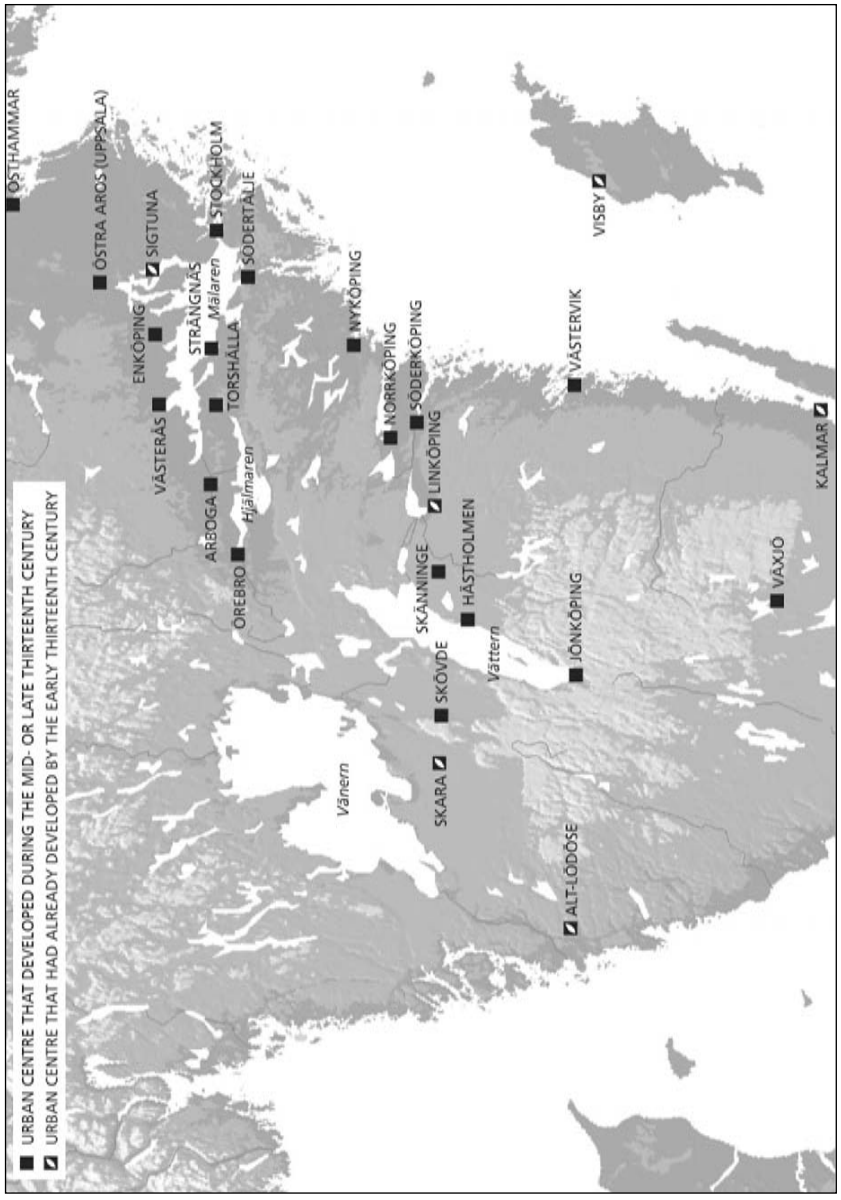
Map 9. *Härad* and *socken* on Öland. After Göransson, 1982.



Map 10. Regions and *härad* districts in Småland. Adapted from T. Andersson, 1982.



Map 11. Norrland: regions, *socknar*, castles and *kungsgårdar*. Adapted from I. Jonsson, 1982.



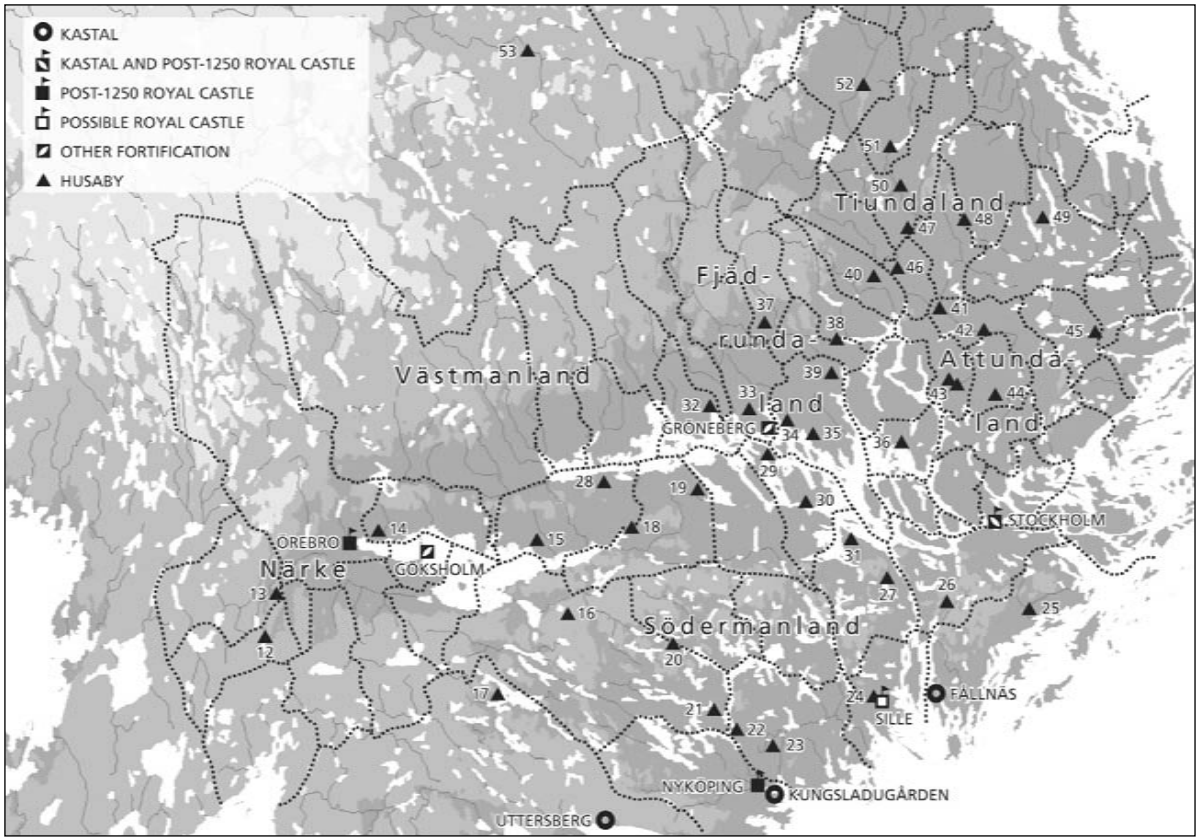
Map 12. Towns in thirteenth-century Sweden.

List of *husaby*-sites—Maps 13 and 14

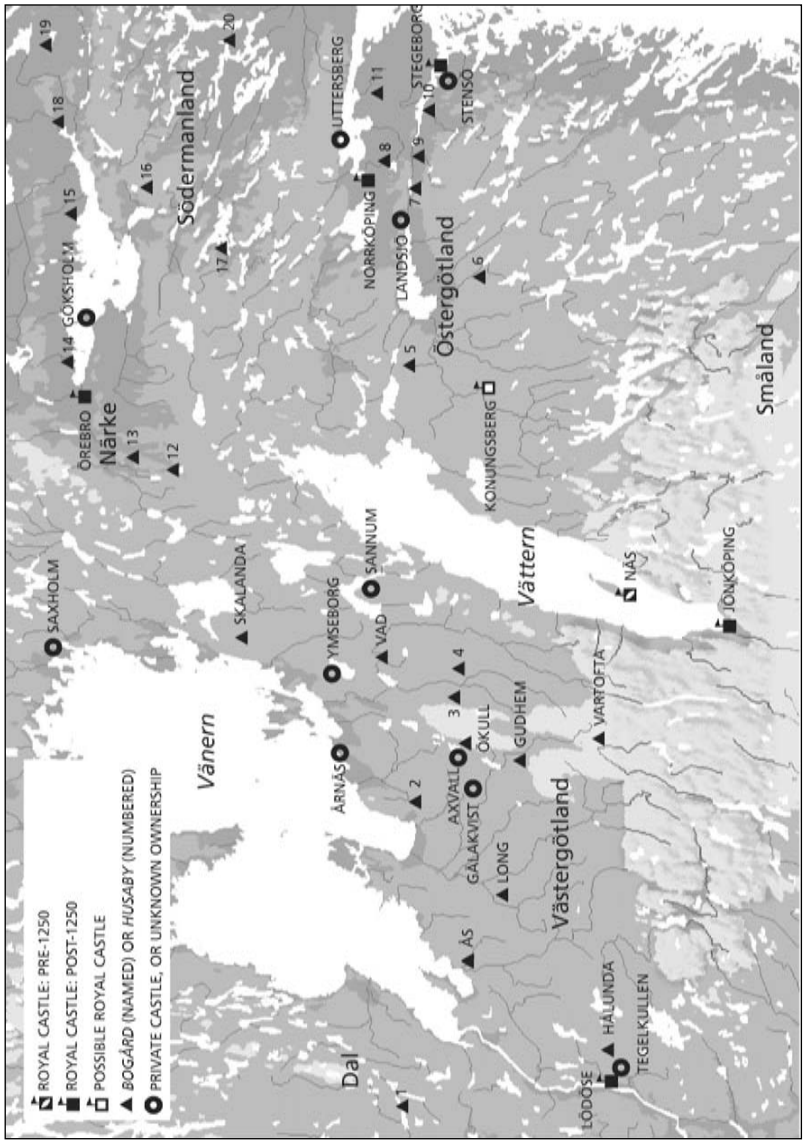
1. Husaby [Torps *socken*, Valbo *hörad*, Dalsland]
2. Husaby [Kinda *härad*, Västergötland]
3. Husaby [Husaby, Västergötland], *probably Olof Skötkonung's foundation*, late 11th century
4. Husaby [Forsby *socken*, Käkinds *härad*, Västergötland]
5. Husbyfjöl [Brunneby *socken*, Bobärg *härad*, Östergötland] *Husabystrand*, 1348?
6. Husby [Vists *socken*, Hanakind *härad*, Östergötland] *Husaby wijsth ostgocie sita*, 1332
7. Västra Husaby [Västra Husaby *socken*, Hamarkind *härad*, Östergötland] *Husby-Aspwid*, 1280
8. Husby [Norrköping, Losing *härad*, Östergötland] *husaby*, 1381?
9. Husby [Skönbärga *socken*, Hamarkind *härad*, Östergötland] *Husaby i Skinbærga*, 1348
10. Husby [Mogata *socken*, Hamarkind *härad*, Östergötland] *husaby*, 1381 (probable)
11. Östra Husby [Östra Husaby *socken*, Öskind *härad*, Östergötland] *Husaby inter wika*, 1278
12. Husby [Viby *socken*, Närke] probably *Husaby in Nerikia*, 1270s; *Husaby*, 1303
13. Husby [Kräklinge *socken*, Närke] *hwsaby*, 1347
14. Husby [Glanshammars *socken*, Närke] *husaby*, 1303
15. Husby [Öjaby *socken*, Västra Rekarne, Södermanland] *Husaby*, 1359
16. Husby [Floda *socken*, Uphunda *hundare*, Södermanland] *Husseby*, 1675
17. Husby [Skedevi *socken*, Brabo *härad*, Östergötland]
18. Husby-Rekarne [Husaby *socken*, Östra Rekarne, Södermanland] *Husaby-Byring*, 1292
19. Husby Qäders *socken*, Östra Rekarne, Södermanland] *Hosaby*, 1413
20. Husbytorp [Flens *socken*, Uphunda, Södermanland] *Husseby-torp*, 1642 (called after an earlier *husaby*?)
21. Husby-Oppunda [Jönaker *socken*, Södermanland] *husæby*, 1305
22. Hossabo [Räby-Rönö *socken*, Röna *hundare*] *husaby*, 1384
23. Husby [Svärta *socken*, Röna *hundare*, Södermanland] *Hosaby*, 1381
24. Husby [Vagnhärads *socken*, Hölbo *hundare*, Södermanland]
25. Husby [Österhaninge *socken*, Yttra Tors *hundare*] *Hwsaby*, 1373
26. Husby [Grödinge *socken*, Övra Tors *hundare*, Södermanland] *husaby grodungi*, 1310
27. Husby (Västertälje *socken*, Öknabo *hundare*, Södermanland] *hosaby hanastum*, 1331
28. Husby [Tumbo *socken*, Västra Rekarne, Södermanland] *husaby*, 1423; 1422 (probable)
29. Husby [Aspö *socken*, Sylbo *hundare*, Södermanland] *Husaby in aspu*, 1326
30. Husby [Ytterselö *socken*, Sylbo *hundare*, Södermanland] *Husaby*, 1356
31. Husby-Enhörne [Överenhörna *socken*, Öknabo *hundare*, Södermanland] *Hosaby in Enherne*, 1276
32. Kungsära [Hara *socken*, Seunda *hundare*, Västmanland] *Hosabynom i Hara*, 1399
33. Huseby [Svinagarns *socken*, As *hundare*, Fjädrundaland] *Husabyswinnagarn*, 1345
34. Kungs-Husby [Trögdh *hundare*, Fjädrundaland] *Husaby-Trögh*, 1264
35. Vallby/Kungsvallby [Trögdh *hundare*, Fjädrundaland] *Husaby gismark*, 1314
36. Husby-Bro [Bro *hundare*, Attundaland] *Hosaby*, 1286
37. Husby [Torstuna *socken*, Torsakers *hundare*, Fjädrundaland]
38. Husby [Gryts *socken*, Hagund *hundare*, Tiundaland] *Hosaby*, 1316
39. Husby-Sjutolft [Trögdh *hundare*, Fjädrundaland] *Husaby-Siutolft*, 1303
40. Husby Ullaraker [Bondkyrko *socken*, Ullerâkers *hundare*, Tiundaland] *Husbyulleraker*, 1345
41. Husby [Lagga, Langhundare, Attundaland] *husaby*, 1273

42. Husby-Länghundra [Langhundare, Attundaland] *husabyernati*, 1314, 1348
43. Husby-Arlinghundra [Husaby-Norsunda *socken*, Arländia *hundare*, Attundaland] *Mansionem-Norusær*, 1275
    Åshusby [Norsunda socken, Arländia *hundare*, Attundaland] *Husaby*, 1349
44. Husby [Markim *socken*, Sämingia *hundare*, Attundaland] *Hwssaby marcham*, 1298
45. Husby-Sjuhundra [Lyhundra *hundare*, Attundaland] *Husaby Lyhundare*, 1348
46. Husby [Gamla Uppsala *socken*, Vaksala *hundare*] *Housbuj*, c. 1200
47. Husby [Lena *socken*, Norund *hundare*, Tiundaland] *Hosæby-Tolang*, 1291
48. Husby [Rasbo *socken*, Rasbo *hundare*, Tiundaland] *Usby*, 1312
49. Husby [Bledakers *socken*, Närdinga *hundare*, Tiundaland] *Husabynærdhingiahundare*, 1345
50. Husby [Tensta *socken*, Norund *hundare*] *Hosæby-Norunde*, 1280
51. Husby [Vendels *socken*, Vendel *hundare*, Tiundaland] *Husæby*, 1312?, 1400
52. Husbyborg (Tierps *socken*, Tierps *hundare*, Tiundaland] *Husæby*, 1312?
53. Husaby [Dalarna]

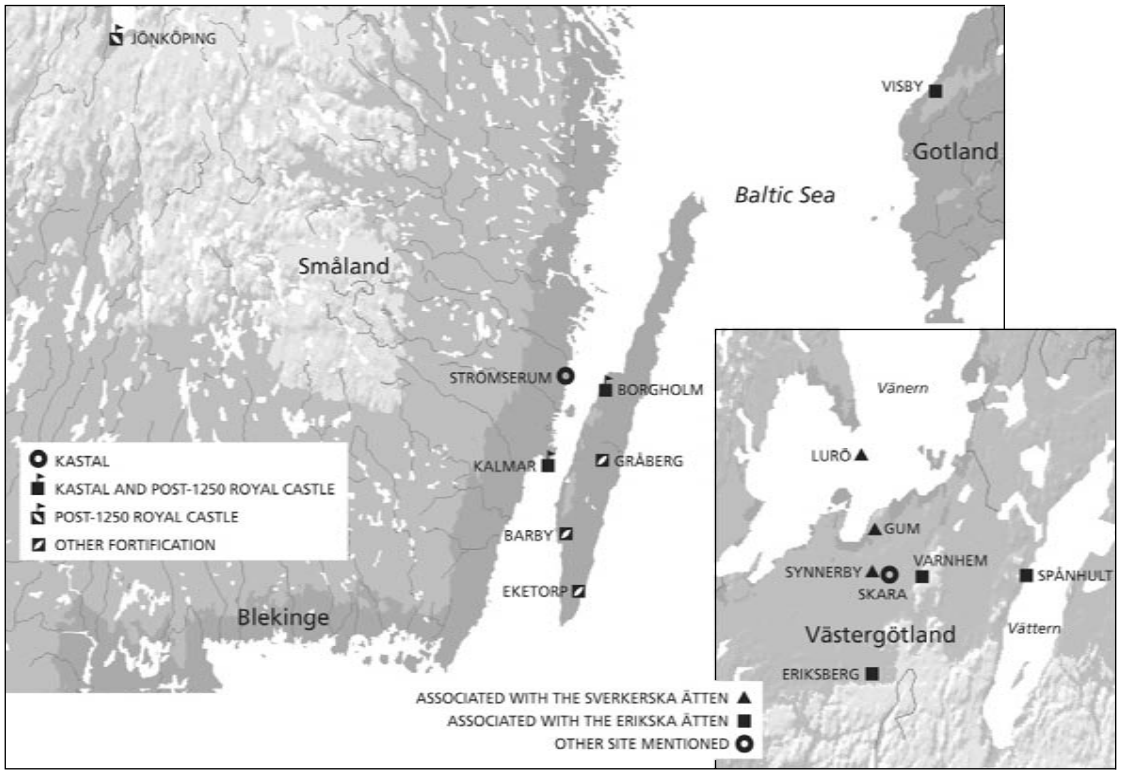
For *husabyar* that are known from early sources, the first recorded name and source date are listed. A *Hosæby-Tolangh* is also recorded in 1280, location uncertain, but possibly in Ernatuna *socken*, Norunds *hundare* (Schück 1914 p. 11). In the extreme north-west of Tiundaland there was also a Vala *hundare*, later part of Vendel *härad*, but no place named *husaby* is known of in that region. *Hundare/härad boundaries* in Västmanland and Närke are not known before the late fourteenth century. There was also one *husaby* in Tensta *socken* in Attundalands *rod*, and a Hosaeby in Vingru (Munsö *socken*), Södermanland (1281).



Map 13. Castles and *husabyar* in Svealand.

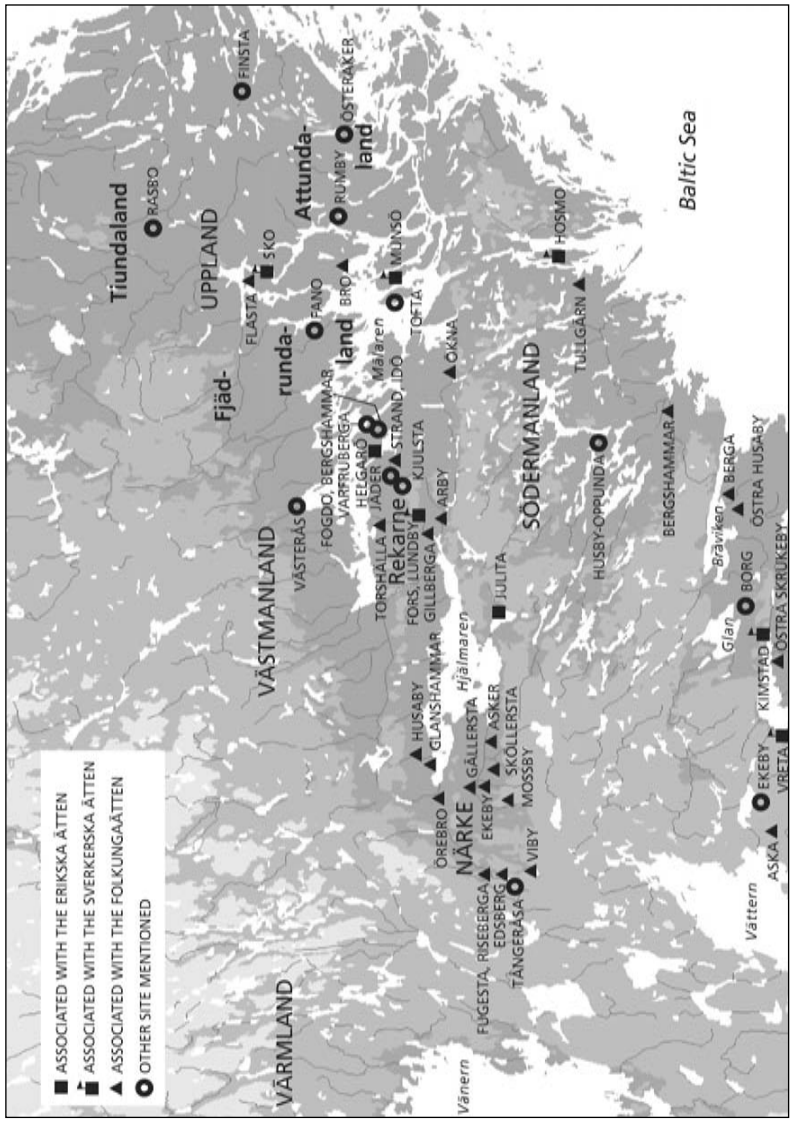


Map 14. Castles, *husabyar* and *bogårdar* in Götaland and Närke.



Map 15. Fortifications in Småland and Öland.

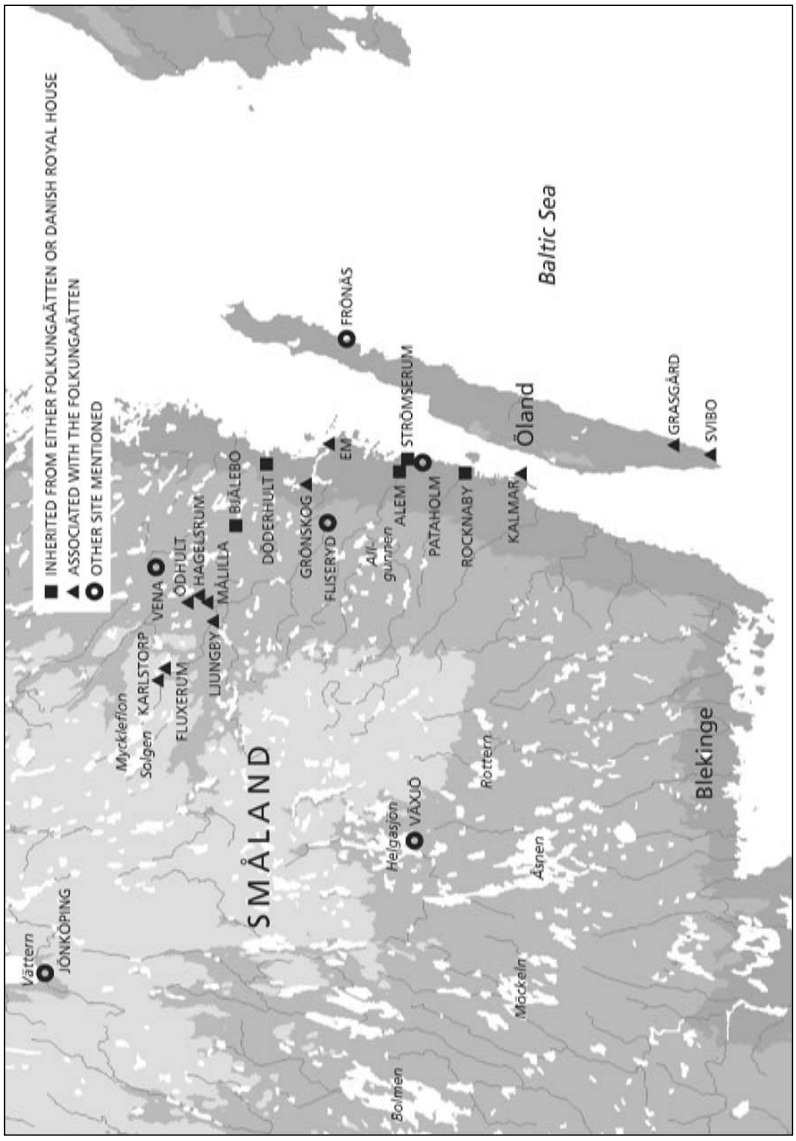
Map 16. Places associated with leading families in Västergötland.



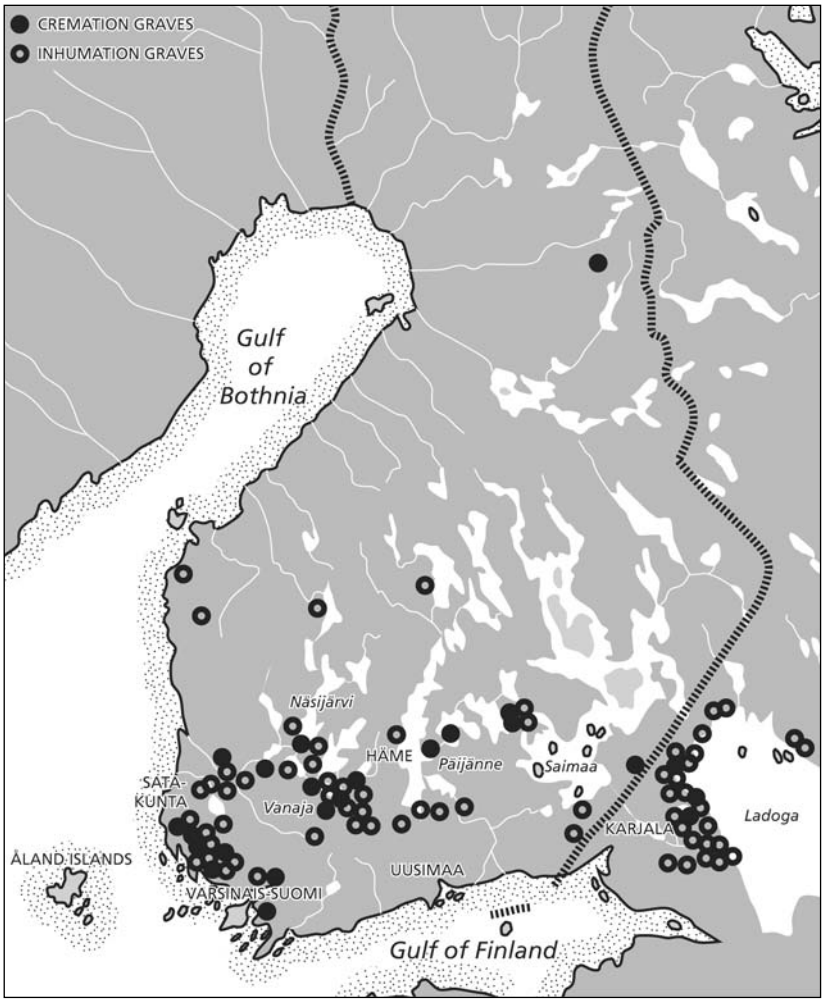
Map 17. Places associated with leading families in Svealand.



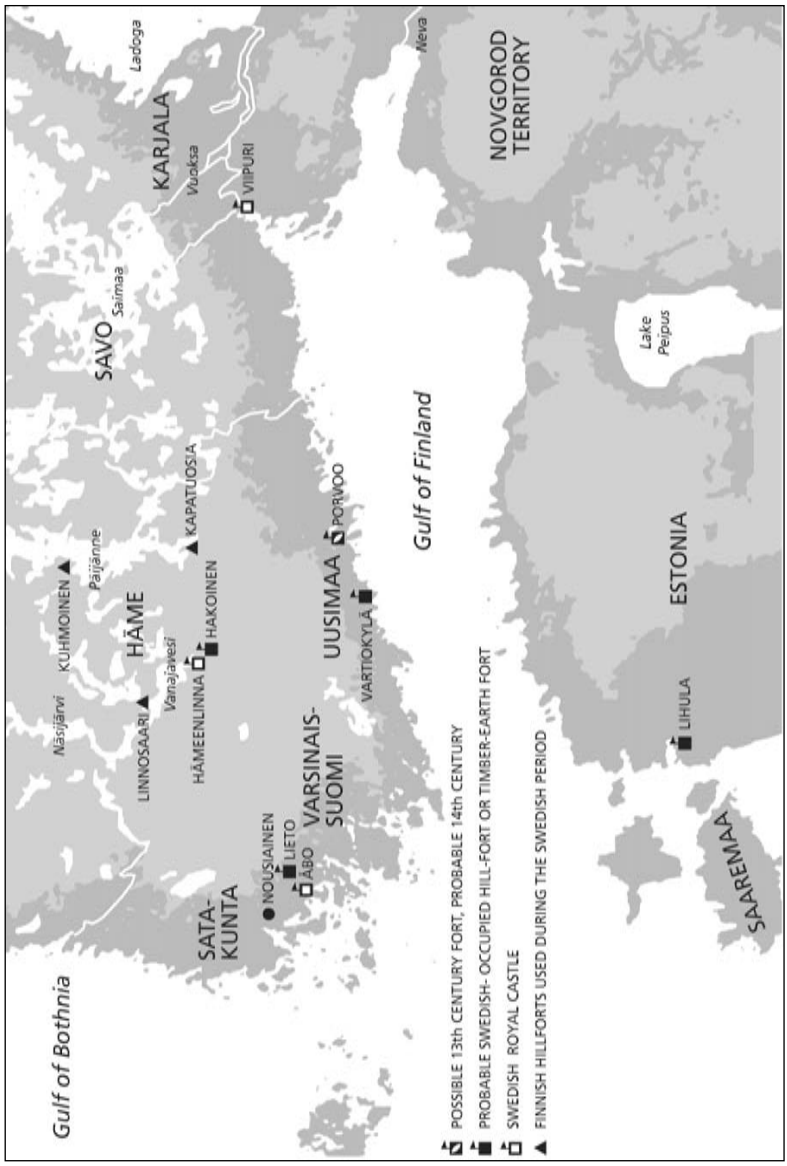
Map 18. Places associated with leading families in Östergötland.



Map 19. Places associated with leading families in Småland.



Map 20. Crusade Period settlement in Finland. Adapted from Huurre, 1995.



Map 21. Swedish fortifications in Finland and Estonia.

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